Free Board Game Inside! ★ **2 Cute Posters You'll Love**

November/December 2008

americangirl.com

American Girl®

13 "green" holiday crafts to create

* Take a manners **quiz**
* Make **sweet** little animals

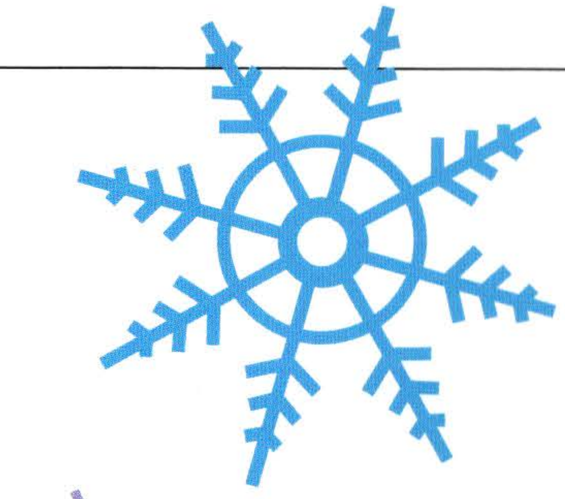
Plus! Girls' best friendship stories

American Girl®

Volume 16, Number 6

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Holiday Hoopla!
Play this silly board game with your family and friends.

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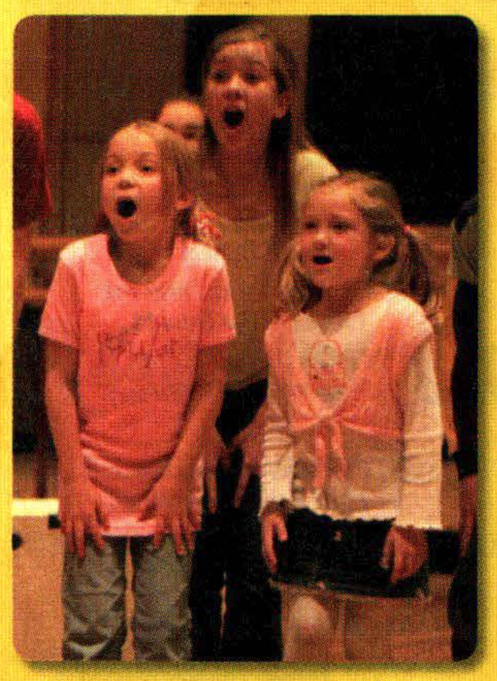


Give the Gift of Green
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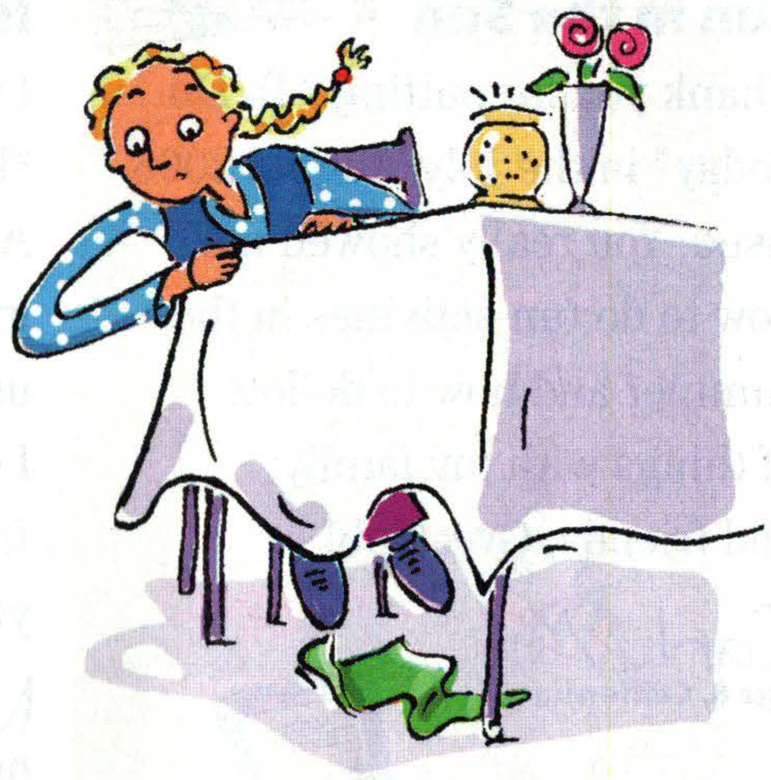
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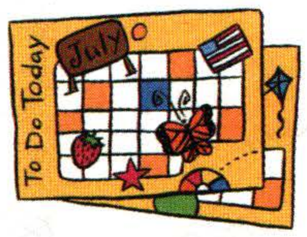
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Tiny animals you can make—and eat!

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Cover photo: Steven Talley

Letters from You

Fun in the Sun



Thank you for putting "To Do Today" in the July/August 2008 issue. You really showed me how to do fun activities in the summer and how to do lots of things with my family and friends. Great job!

Carly M.
Age 8, California

On the Job



I really liked "Girls at Work" in the July/August 2008 issue. The stories were fun and interesting, and showed me that any girl, at any age, can do any job she wishes if she sets her mind to it!

Carolyn C.
Age 11, Minnesota

Island Girls



I would love to say thanks for "Island Party" in the July/August 2008 issue. They were great tips, and I will be sure to use them for my birthday party! I can't wait to try the frozen fruit flowers. And thanks for your wonderful magazine!

Nicole C.
Age 13, New Jersey



Write to Us!

Want to drop us a line? Write us at:

***American Girl* magazine**
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562

You can also send letters via e-mail to readermail@americangirl.com.
Either way, be sure to include your first and last name and your birth date. We can't print every letter we receive, but we read and learn from each one.

Win It!

On page 49, you'll read about our latest Win It! contest. To enter, send a postcard by December 10, 2008, with your first and last name and address to:

Win It!—N/D 2008
***American Girl* magazine**
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562



Official Rules

1. Employees of American Girl and its affiliates and their families are not eligible.
2. Only one entry per family.
3. To be valid, all entries must be received by mail by December 10, 2008. Entries may not be faxed or e-mailed. **A parent or guardian must sign the entry.**
4. One winner will be chosen at random.
5. All entries become the property of American Girl and will not be returned.
6. Void where prohibited by law.

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Girls EXPRESS

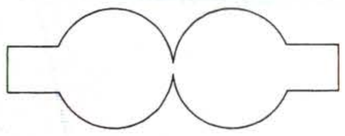
Really Cool Gift

This candy snowman would be a sweet surprise for a bus driver, teacher, or other helpful adult.



1. Wash your hands. Fill a clean, clear jar with white candies or mints, adding a few dark-colored candies for buttons. Make sure the dark candies are visible, and replace the lid tightly.

2. Use scissors to cut two attached circles out of white card stock, leaving a rectangle tab on each end. (See drawing.)



3. Fold so that one circle covers the other. Use markers to draw a face on one circle with the tabs at the bottom. Fold the tabs under and use tape to attach the head to the jar lid.

4. Cut colored paper to make a hat, add a note, and attach to the head with tape. Cut a piece of colorful fleece to use as a scarf. Tie the scarf around the lid. So sweet!

Did You Know?

You'll flip for these fun facts!

No White in Sight

Are you dreaming of a white Christmas? Your other holiday wishes could come true, but that one might not. Weather scientists have found that in most U.S. states, residents generally have less than a 25 percent chance of seeing snow on December 25.

Buzzword

hoopla

How to say it: HOOP-lah

What it means: busy excitement or activity

One way to use it: Becca's mom knocked on the bedroom door and asked, "What's all this hoopla about?"



The buzzword is tucked into this issue of *American Girl*. Can you find it? The answer is on page 42.

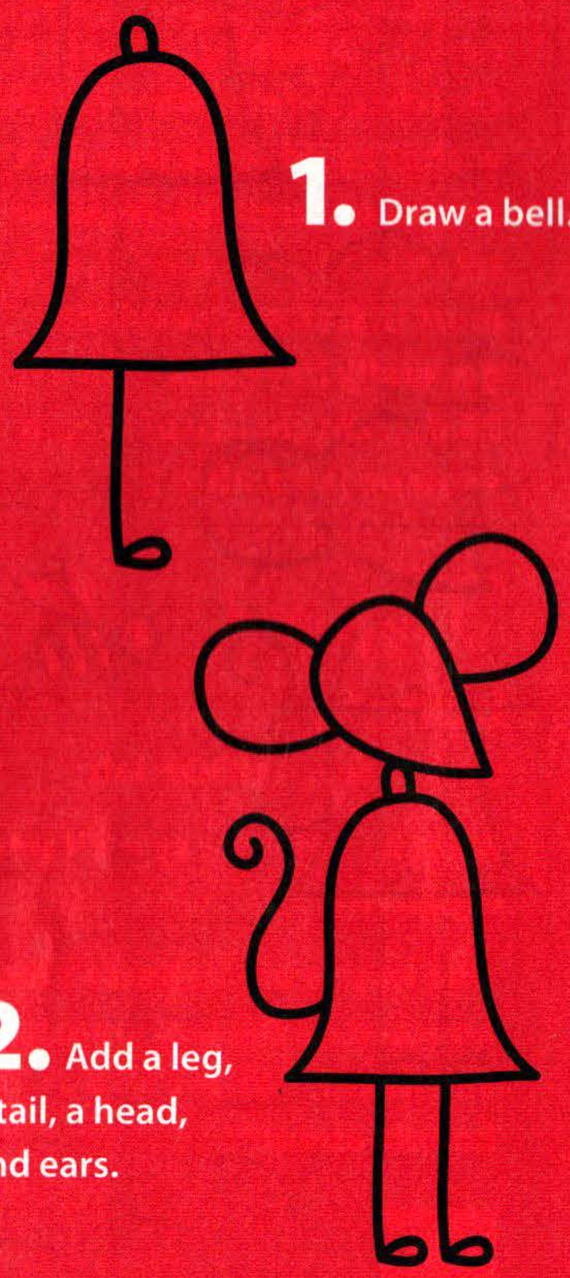
Find It!

Look for fun facts sprinkled throughout the magazine!

Illustrations: Tracey Wood

Nice Mice

Sketch a cute mouse with a few simple shapes.



1. Draw a bell.

2. Add a leg, a tail, a head, and ears.



3. Draw a face, necklace, and arms.

True Story

Jaci-Lee got onto the ski lift—but she didn't make it up the mountain.

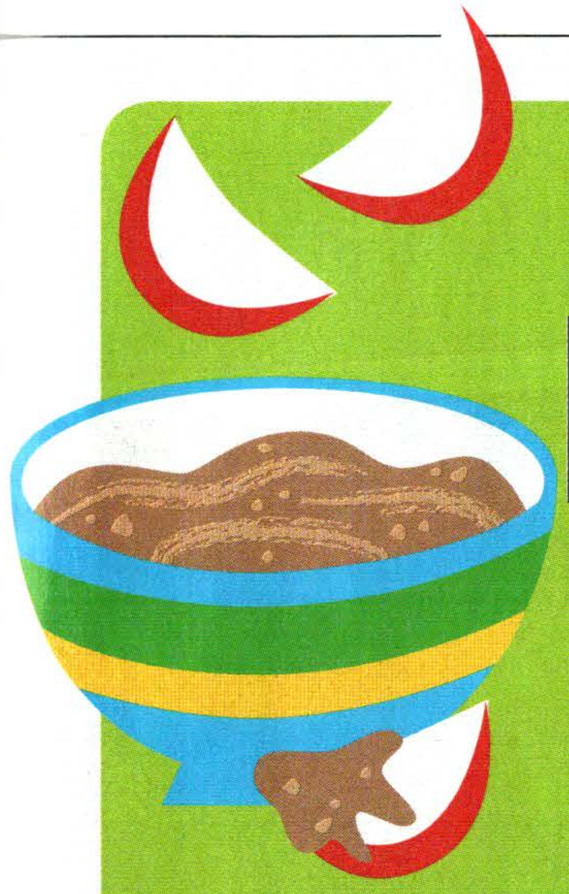
Dear American Girl,

Over Christmas break a few years ago, my family and I went skiing in Colorado. We were having an awesome time, and I decided that I wanted to ride the ski lift with just my younger brother. But as I was boarding the lift, I slipped. I held on, but I could tell that I was going to fall. My dad was in a panic, trying to get the lift operators to stop the lift and at the same time trying to run to catch me. He was too late, though. After a few more seconds, I fell to the ground, landing on my side and losing my breath.

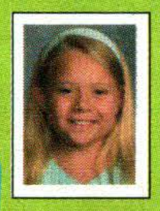
I rode to the hospital on a stretcher that was pulled by a snowmobile. The doctors ran a bunch of tests and took some X-rays. Amazingly, I hadn't broken a single bone! I just had a bruised rib cage. I was really lucky. Now, whenever someone mentions the story, my mom always says that I was saved by angels that day. I think she's right.

Sincerely,
Jaci-Lee M.
Age 12, Texas





Fun Dip



Make fruit taste even more delicious with this recipe from 10-year-old Chloe S. of Wisconsin.

Combine 1 tablespoon peanut butter, 1 tablespoon marshmallow creme, and 1 tablespoon Nutella spread. Mix well and use as a dip with apple slices. Enjoy!

Presto Change-o

Does saying "so long" to your summer clothes leave you with the winter blues? Try these tips for keeping your fashion mood sunny.

Summer

Favorite

Summer dress



Add jeans and a cardigan.

Favorite

Summer top



Add a long-sleeved top and long pants.

Favorite

Summer skirt



Add warm tights and boots.

Winter

Cut out your answer and mail it to the address on page 2.

Creative Corner



Sparkly Stars

Cut out card. Flip over for directions.

AG Poll

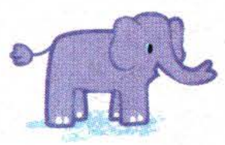
In our May/June issue, we asked you which life-sized stuffed animal you'd most like in your room. Here's what you told us:



274



82



201



38

Next question:

If you had your own kitchen, which of these gadgets would you want most?

- Snow-cone maker
- Popcorn machine
- Ice cream dispenser
- Nacho cheese warmer

Sparkly Stars

Draw a star on paper. Place paper on a rimmed cookie sheet and cover with wax paper. Trace star with a thick line of fabric glue. Cover glue with glitter. Let dry for 24 hours. Tap off extra glitter, and then gently peel star from wax paper. Tie on a ribbon to hang. Happy holidays!

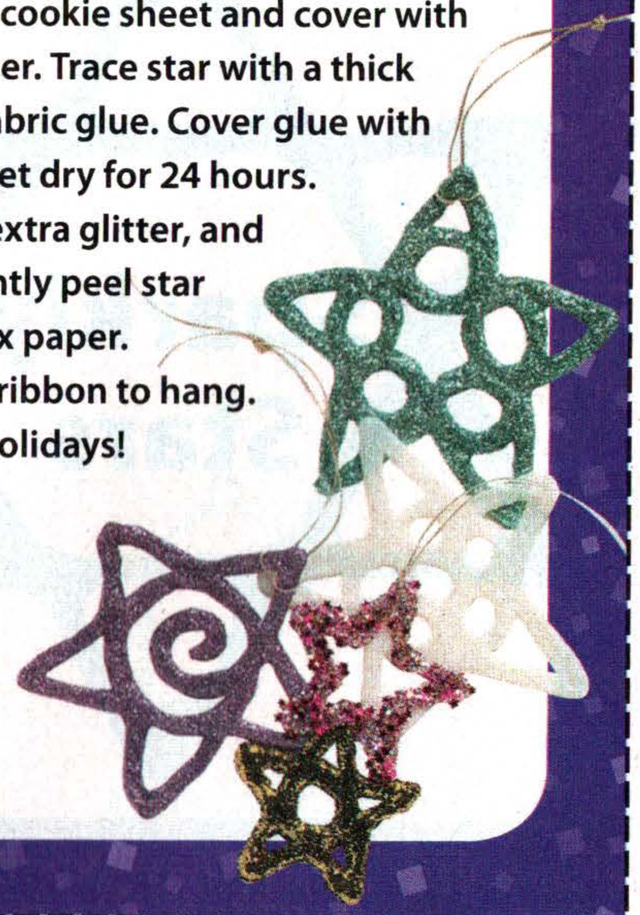
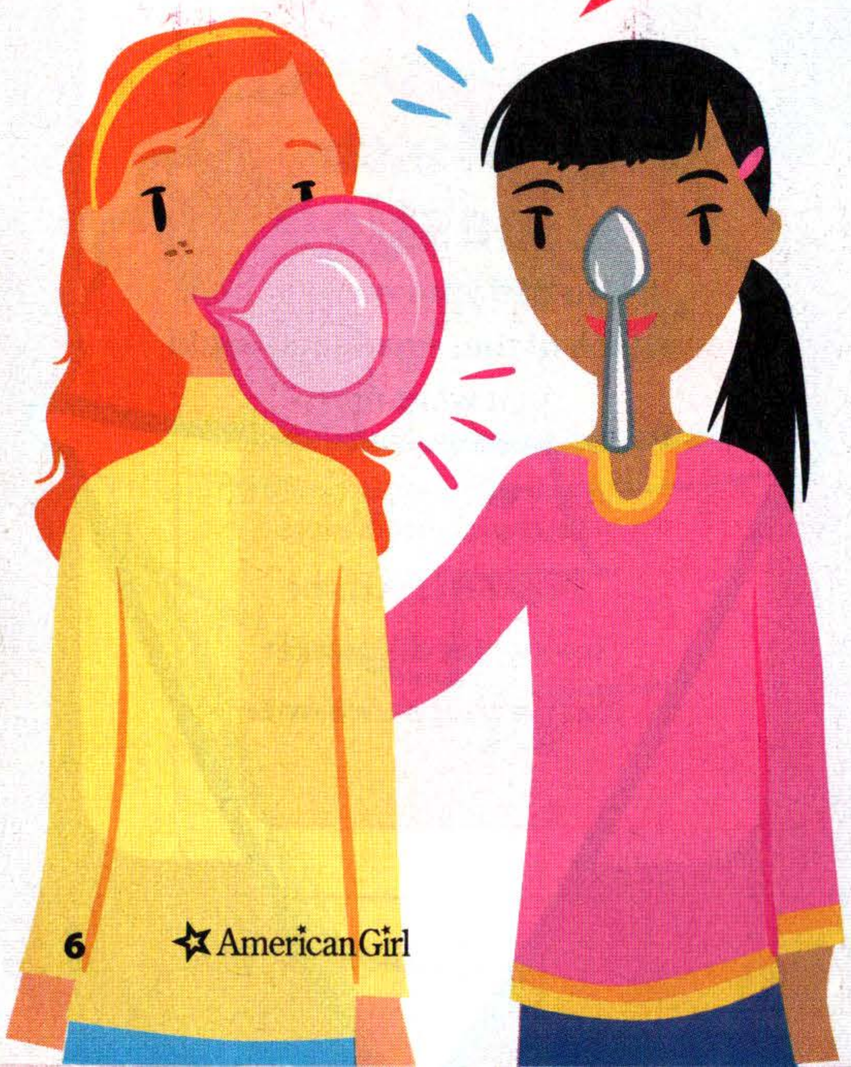


Photo: Radlund Photography

Help Wanted!

What's your super skill? Can you write with your feet or with both hands at once? Can you tie a shoe with just one hand, blow a double bubble, or hang a spoon from your nose? Send a photo of yourself performing your super skill and a letter describing it to the address on page 2. Please include your name, address, and birth date. Sorry, photos can't be returned.



Shining Stars

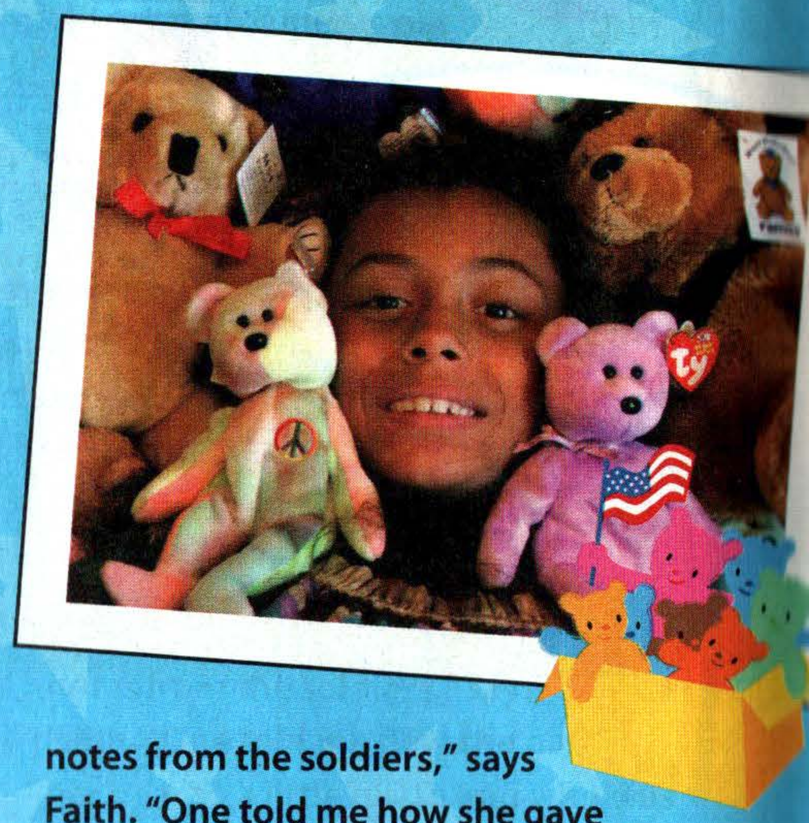
Bear Hugs to Soldiers

Faith K. collected more than 1,000 teddy bears and sent them all the way to Iraq.

"I don't understand the war very well, but my teddy bears make me happy," she says. "I wanted to share that feeling with soldiers who are far away from their families."

The 11-year-old asked her school and local businesses to help. Her "Bear Hugs to the Troops" collection boxes soon overflowed. The Indiana girl and her mom made lots of trips to gather the bears. Faith then organized local kids to write letters to accompany each bear overseas.

"I have gotten many thank-you notes from the soldiers," says Faith. "One told me how she gave her bear to a little girl in Iraq who was sick. My connection with these people is important to me. As long as the bears come, I will send them."



Cash for Creatures

Eight-year-old Olivia V. adores her own dog so much that it made her want to help other dogs who were less fortunate. The Georgia girl asked her mom if she could use a corner of the family store to raise money for animals, and her mom said yes. Olivia called her corner "Puppy Love" and sold items such as treats and toys for dogs and cats.

Soon Olivia had raised $167. "When my daddy and I brought the money to the shelter, the people cried and thanked me. It made me feel good," she remembers.



Olivia's classmates wanted to help, too. Last winter, they made cute animal ornaments out of clay. They painted the ornaments and sold them, raising another $400. "Everyone loves the animals," says Olivia.

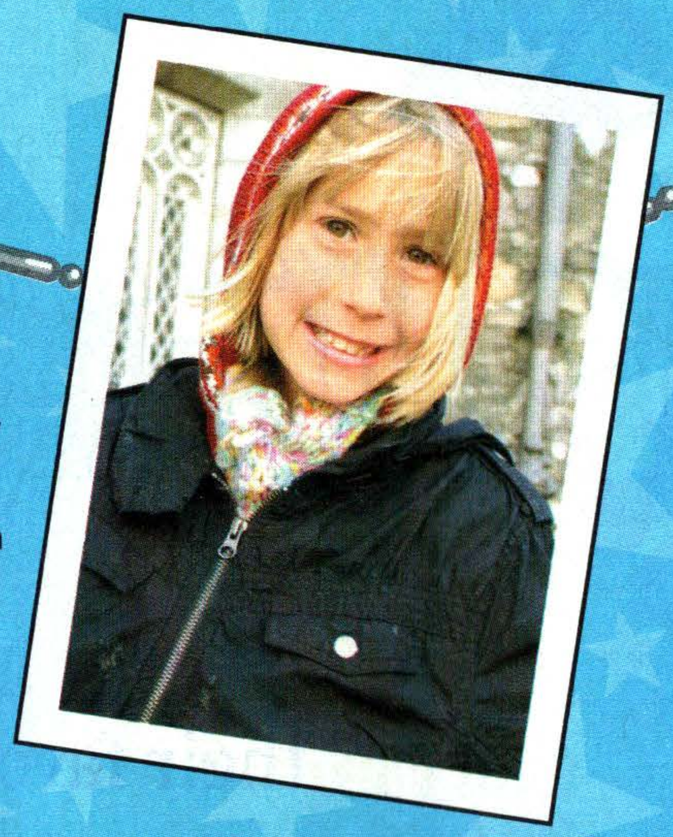


Photo: Journal & Courier

Jewelry for Charity

Kyra H. knows a lot about helping others—even how to help by shopping! "In the grocery store, my mom showed me how buying cookies made by a particular company helps people because the company donates money to charity," the California girl says.

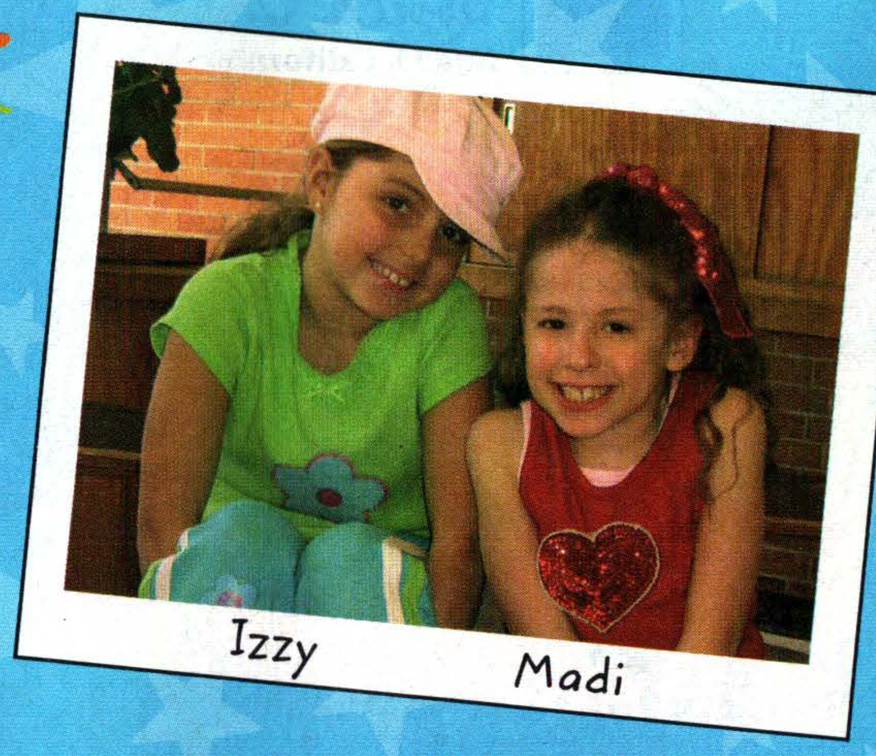
So Kyra, age 10, decided to raise money that way, too. She sculpted five different charms out of clay, each one to benefit a specific charity. The designs were made into silver charms for necklaces. Selling them through her mom's jewelry store, she's raised almost $3,000.

Kyra donates money from her paw-shaped Furry Friends charm to an animal shelter. Her Little Airplane charm raises money to fly doctors to a health clinic in Mexico. "My parents taught me that even if you're young, helping others is a good thing to do," Kyra says.



Dance Difference

Stepsisters Izzy M. and Madi D. love to dance—they dance in the studio, in their living room, and in shows all over their town. "My mom has a dance studio," says Madi, 11. "But instead of doing recitals, we do benefit shows." After each performance, the studio collects money from the audience to give to good causes. The New York girls perform in many places, and they once danced in a Christmas show to raise money for a girl at their school who has cancer. So far, they have helped to raise $8,000.



"It feels great to help people by dancing," says Madi. Adds Izzy, who is also 11: "Getting ready for the benefits is fun. We put on makeup and costumes. We do jazz and modern dance—our whole family gets involved. It's fun to see all the people in the audience smiling."



You can shine, too.

Family Volunteer Day is November 22. Here are some ideas for activities that you can do along with your family to make your community a nicer place:



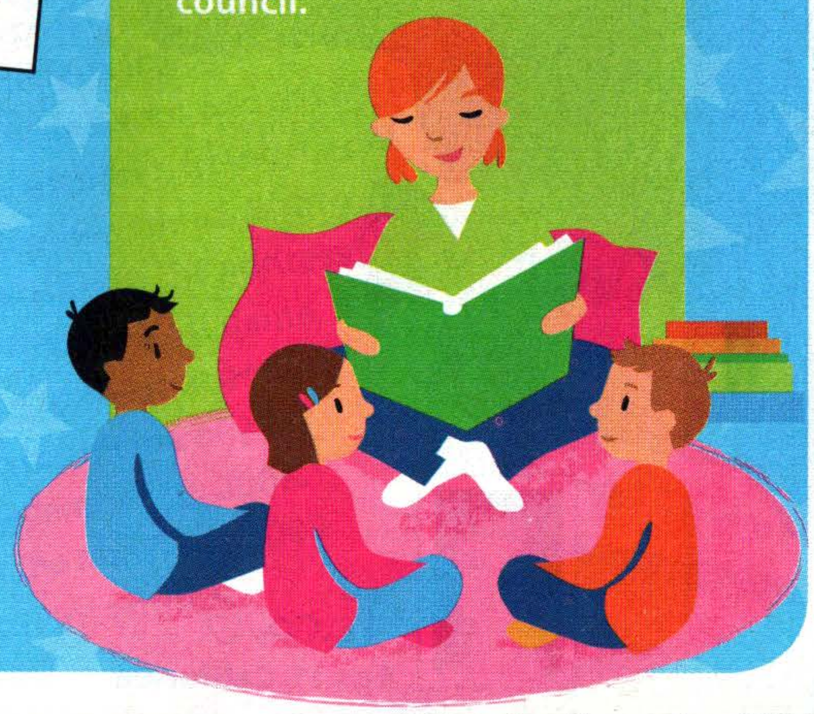
- Go with a parent to ask an older neighbor if your family can help with yard work or holiday decorating.



- Bake cookies or cupcakes, and deliver the goodies to your local fire station.



- Help your local food pantry deliver Thanksgiving groceries to needy families.
- Read books to kids at your library or literacy council.



Contest

Santa Paws

These girls turned their favorite animals into furry, fishy, feathery, and fun ornaments.





Elizabeth A.
Age 12, Illinois





Rebecca T.
Age 11, California







Nyla G.
Age 13, New York

Tara G.
Age 11, California



Emma C.
Age 7, Texas



Danielle K.
Age 14, Florida

Barbara B.
Age 9, Michigan

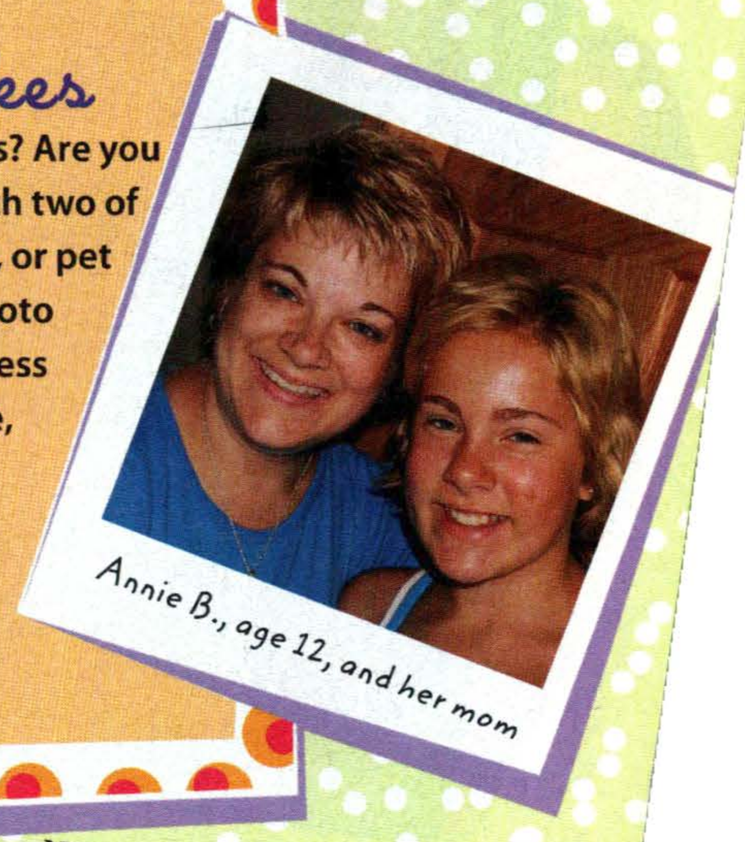
Alexis B.
Age 12, Ohio



Kerstyn O.
Age 9, New York

New Contest: Look-alikes

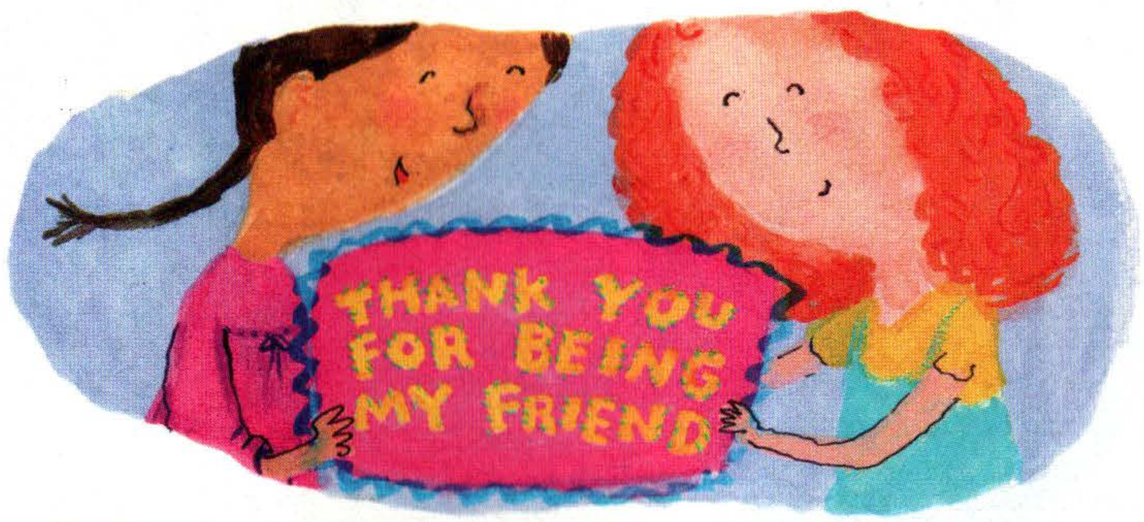
Do you and your best friend look like twins? Are you your Dad's double? Are you and your pooch two of a kind? If you and a family member, friend, or pet are mirror images of each other, send a photo of yourself and your look-alike to the address on page 2. Include your first and last name, address, and birth date and the first and last name, address, and birth date of your look-alike. Deadline: December 10, 2008. Winners will appear in the May/June 2009 issue. Sorry, we can't return entries.



Annie B., age 12, and her mom

Giving Thanks

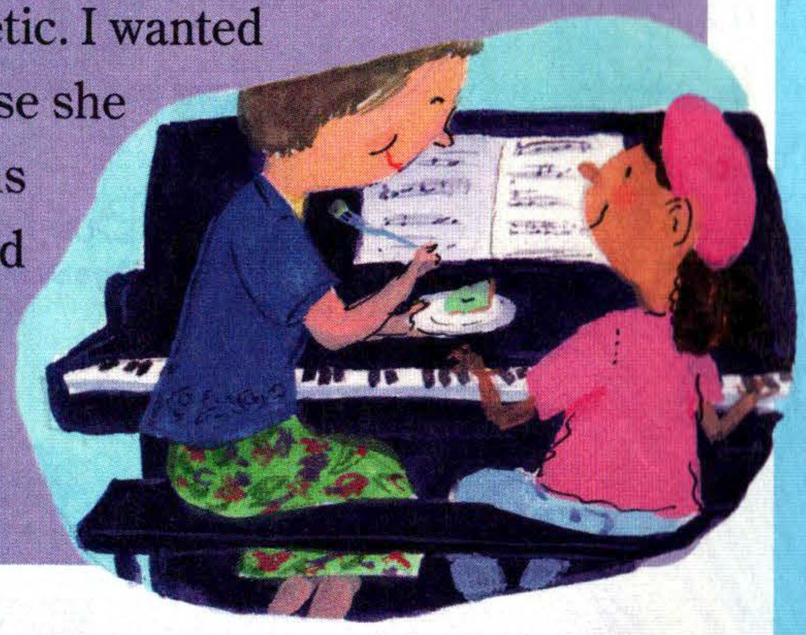
These girls showed their appreciation in creative and clever ways.





I thanked my piano teacher by making her a key lime pie. The pie was sugar-free because my teacher is diabetic. I wanted to thank her because she always takes her time when she is teaching me. Because of her, I did a good job at my piano recital.

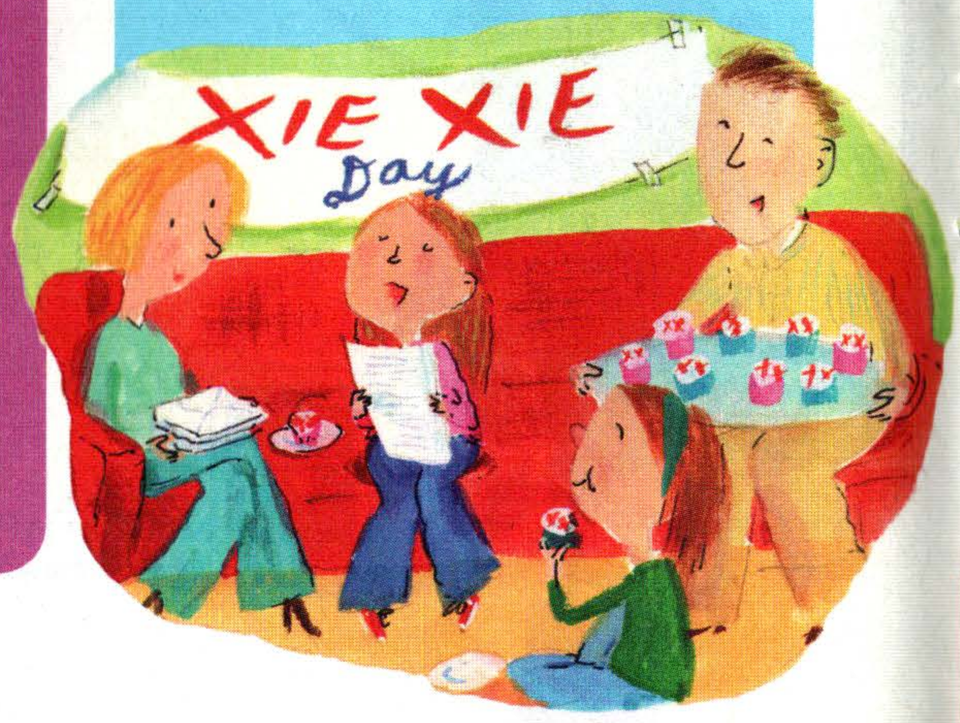
Marisol R.
Age 8, Texas





I've made up a holiday called "Xie Xie Day." Xie xie (pronounced *shyeh-shyeh*) means "thank you" in Mandarin Chinese. On this day, my family does nice things for one another. Last year, I wrote a story for everyone, my mom made cards, and my sister and my dad made desserts. It's how we say thanks to one another for being a great family.

Kay T.
Age 11, New Hampshire





For Christmas, I wanted to thank my grandpa for everything he's given me. So I wrote him a poem and read it out loud to my family. It was a hit! I like to give poems to my friends and family. It's a great way to say thanks!

Kathleen R.
Age 12, Kansas



My mom is my hero. So one day, I got some green paper (because green's her favorite color) and made a card for her. When she opened it, it said, "I love you" in big letters. After she saw it, she said, "I love you" and gave me a hug.

Jessica B.
Age 12, Florida



When my mom broke both of her wrists, people brought us meals every night. I drew pictures and made thank-you notes to put in with the dishes when I returned them.

Makayla H.
Age 9, New Hampshire



To say thanks for everything my mom does, I made her a homemade spa. I dressed up and served her breakfast in bed. Then I painted her nails, fluffed her pillows, and even rubbed her feet!

Bailey J.
Age 11, Texas



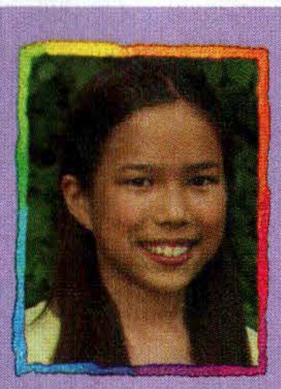
Big Truth

It really IS the thought that counts.



My family is Persian, and we express our thanks by throwing parties to show appreciation for gifts we've received. I help cook the dish that the person likes the most. I always look forward to doing this!

Sheeva S.
Age 13, Texas



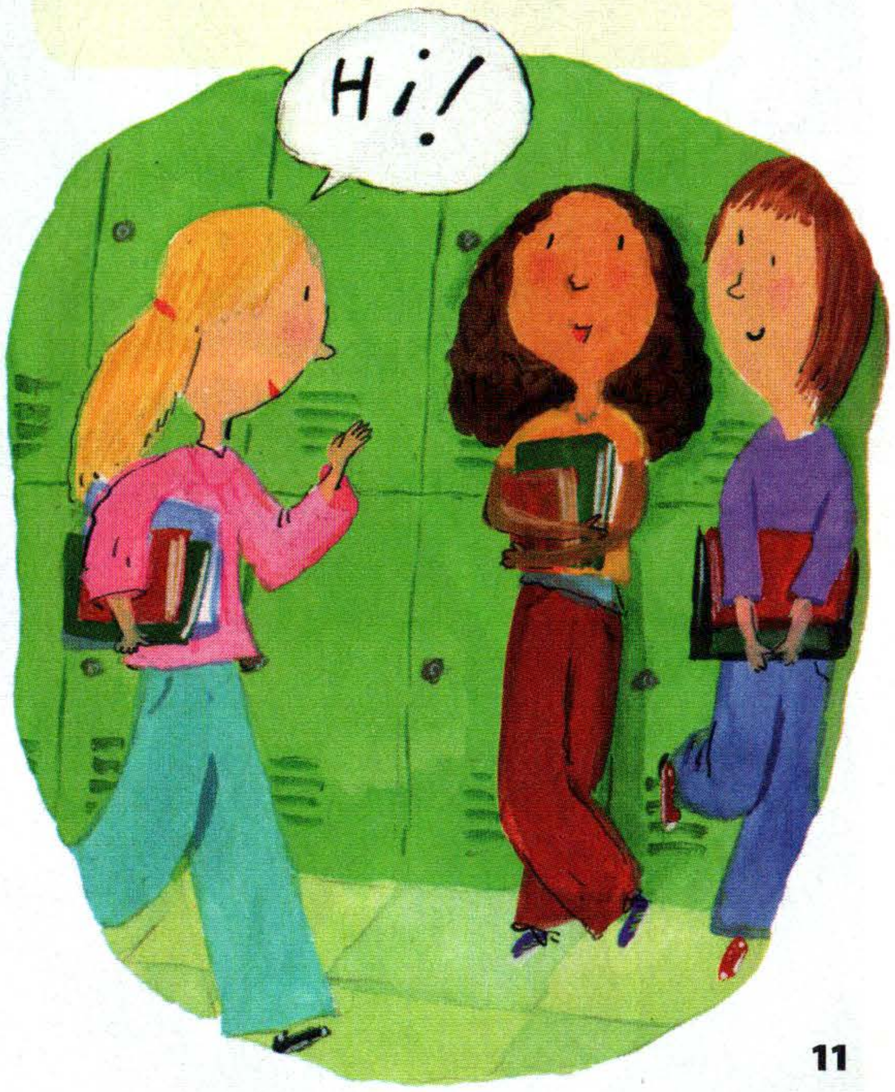
I run our class newsletter, and I decided to thank our teacher by making *her* the theme of an issue. It had poems and essays all about her. My class got to thank her, and she thanked us, too.

Karina W.
Age 10, Massachusetts

Speak from Your Heart

Next subject: Making friends. We want to know your best tips for making new friends. Where do you meet them? What is the best way to approach a girl you would like to be friends with? What are some things you do to help start up a new friendship? Send us your best advice for making new friends.

Send answers, name, birth date, and school photo to the address on page 2. Deadline: December 10, 2008. Some answers will appear in the May/June 2009 issue. ★



Illustrations: Laura Cornell

Give the Gift of Green

Going **"green"** is like giving a gift to the environment! Make your holidays green with these decorations and gifts—each idea is made from one reused object.



Cute Confetti

Use a star-shaped hole punch to turn used wrapping-paper scraps into confetti. Sprinkle the stars onto your family's dinner table before you sit down together for a holiday meal.

Dazzling Decorations

Merry Mitten

If a mitten is missing its mate, turn it into an ornament! Snip a small slit near the top corner of the mitten and loop a piece of ribbon through. Use craft glue to attach ribbon to the glove. Add a pretty snowflake with sparkly puffy paint.



Tiny Tree

Cut strips of used wrapping paper and curl the ends by wrapping them around a pencil. Starting at the bottom of a paper party hat, tape the strips in layers around the hat until it's completely covered. Glue a mini bow to the top of the tree. Fill a clean jar with holiday candy and place the "tree" over it. There are no presents under this tree—just candy!



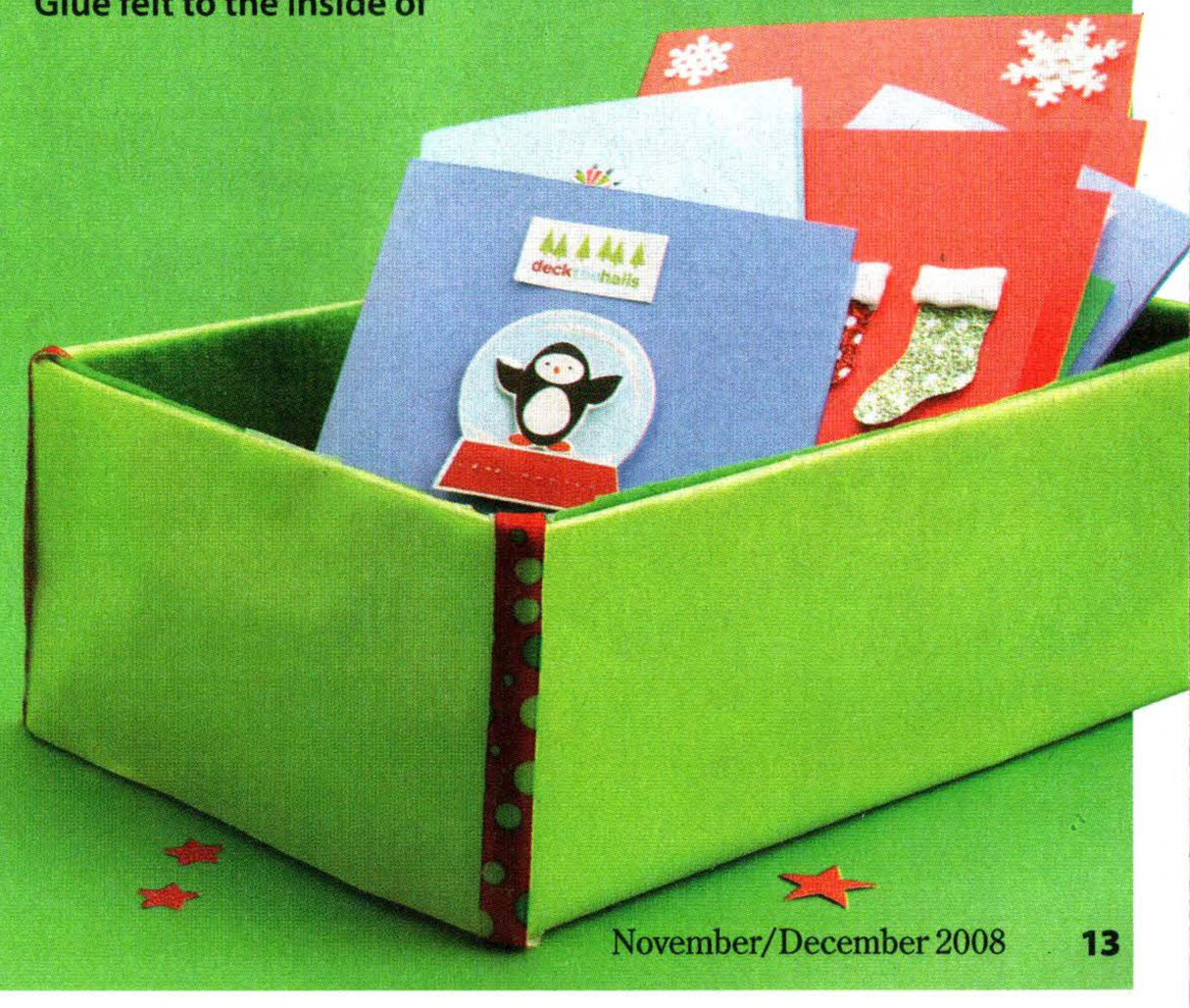
Pretty Planter

Use an oatmeal, raisin, nut, or powdered drink mix container to make a pot for a holiday tree. Wrap a patterned wrapping paper scrap around the container and secure with tape. Collect small rocks and a thin branch. Place the branch in the container and fill the rocks around it so that the twig stands straight up and is secure. Tie small ribbon scraps to the branch. Cut two half circles of white felt and cover the rocks.



Bright Box

Use the bottom of an old shoe box to store holiday cards. Use double-sided tape to attach wrapping paper scraps and ribbon to the outside of the box. Glue felt to the inside of the box. Let dry. After the holidays, cut off the fronts of the cards you have collected. Use them as thank-you postcards to send to your family.

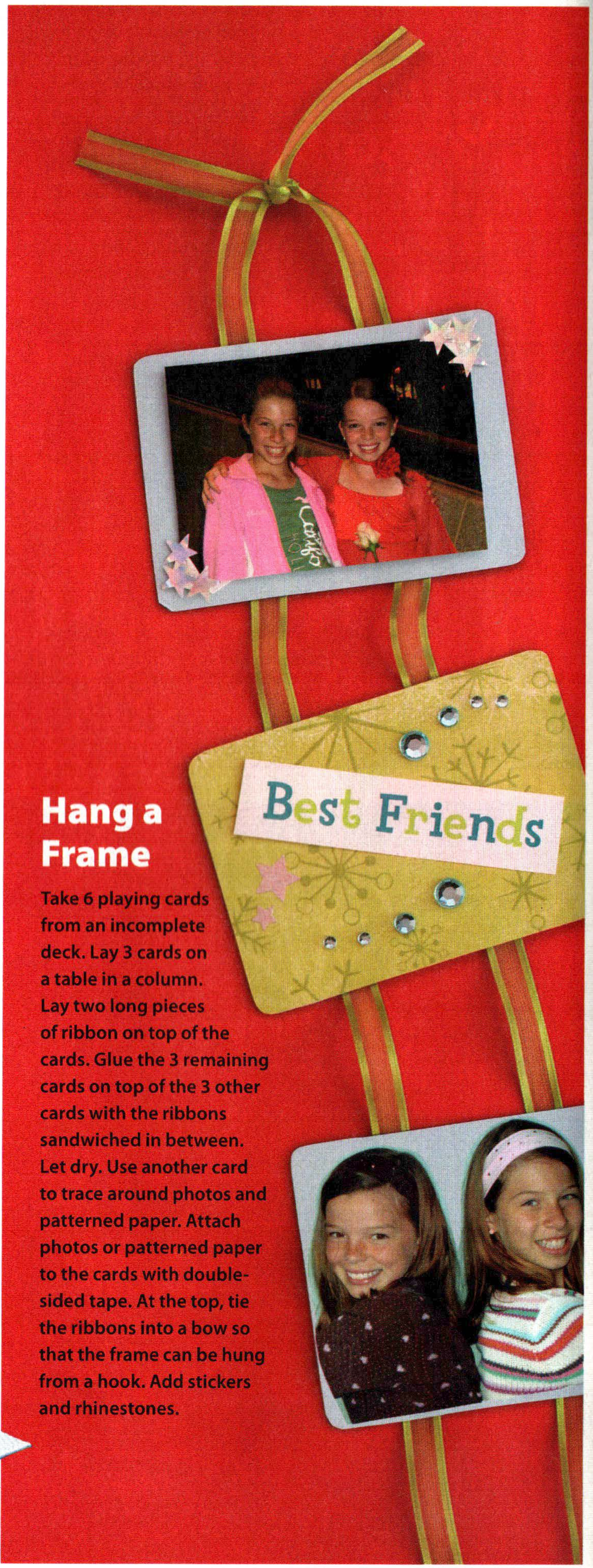


Gifts to Give

Wrap a Ribbon

Turn an old bracelet into a new gift. Stick double-sided tape around the outside of a bracelet. Wrap ribbon tightly around the entire bracelet. When the bracelet is covered, finish by wrapping the ribbon around a few more times and securing each of the last few wraps with craft glue. Add rhinestones with craft glue. Let dry and trim the ribbon end.





Hang a Frame

Take 6 playing cards from an incomplete deck. Lay 3 cards on a table in a column. Lay two long pieces of ribbon on top of the cards. Glue the 3 remaining cards on top of the 3 other cards with the ribbons sandwiched in between. Let dry. Use another card to trace around photos and patterned paper. Attach photos or patterned paper to the cards with double-sided tape. At the top, tie the ribbons into a bow so that the frame can be hung from a hook. Add stickers and rhinestones.

Sock Sack

Turn a sock into a sack for an MP3 player, camera, or phone. Cut off the tube part of a knit sock. Turn the sock inside out. Close one end of the tube by tying a ribbon in a tight double knot near the cut end of the tube. Trim the ends of the ribbon.

Turn the tube inside out so that the knot is hidden. Use fabric glue to attach a ribbon along the edge of the opening. Use a Glue Dot to attach an appliqué to the front of the sack.





Wrist Warmers

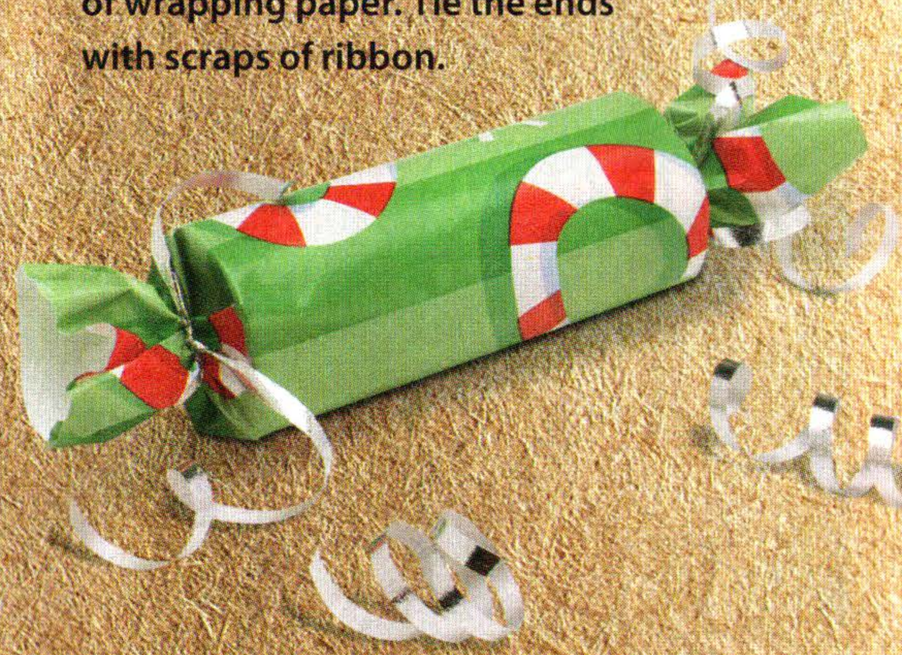
Use a lonely sock to make these cute wrist cuffs. Cut off the tube part of a tube sock. Now cut the tube in half to form 2 cuffs. Attach an appliqué with a dab of fabric glue, or add sparkly stick-on rhinestones.

Ways to Wrap

Wrap your gifts in unique (and eco-friendly) wrapping:

Wrap and Roll

Place a few small gifts inside a toilet paper tube. Roll the tube in a scrap of wrapping paper. Tie the ends with scraps of ribbon.



Sparkle and Shine

Clean an empty food jar. Write a message on a strip of wrapping paper. Attach the strip to the jar with double-sided tape. Fill the jar halfway with tinsel or strips of curling ribbon. Hide the gift in the middle and fill the rest of the jar. Place the lid back on the jar. Finish with a ribbon tied in a bow.



Gifts to Give



Note Tote

Turn two playing cards into the covers of this mini notebook. Trace a playing card from an incomplete deck onto scraps of lined or colored paper. Punch holes in all of the papers in the top left corner, and string them onto a small carabiner or key ring with a snap closure. Glue a small scrap of paper to the cover and use a marker to write a title. Add some stickers. Instant notebook!



Grin Tin

Turn a tin candy container into a special photo frame. Glue decorative paper and photos to the inside. Glue a ribbon around the edges of the tin. Let dry. This frame is a perfect gift for your best bud!



Clutter Container

Brush Mod Podge onto a clean jar and press on tissue paper scraps. Brush a little more Mod Podge over the scraps. It's easiest to work on one section at a time. Let dry. Tie a ribbon around the top of the jar and fill it with candy canes. Once the candy canes are gone, this jar is perfect for collecting odds and ends.

Funny Faces Ornament

Reuse a gift box and put photos of your family, friends, or pets on display. Use wrapping paper scraps to wrap the box. Cut out faces from photos (close-ups work best) and attach them to the sides with double-sided tape. Attach a ribbon loop with tape to the top corner of the box.



More Ways to Wrap

Reduce and Reuse

Wrap a small gift in pages pulled from a magazine or catalog. Once the gift is wrapped, use a marker to draw a bow on the paper.



Simple and Sweet

Cut rectangles from thin cardboard. Glue wrapping paper scraps to the fronts of each gift tag and add stickers. Punch a hole in one corner of each tag. Thread a piece of ribbon through the hole and tie it in a knot. Write a name on the tag.



Have a Green Holiday

There are many other ways to be considerate of the environment this holiday season. Reuse boxes for gifts, donate any gifts you don't need to a charity, and ask your parents to use wrapping paper made with recycled content. The only thing better than a snow-white holiday is a green one! ★

Friendship Matters

Thanks to You

A good friendship is one of the best gifts. These girls talk about the friends who make them feel most thankful.



I'm thankful for my fun faraway friends.

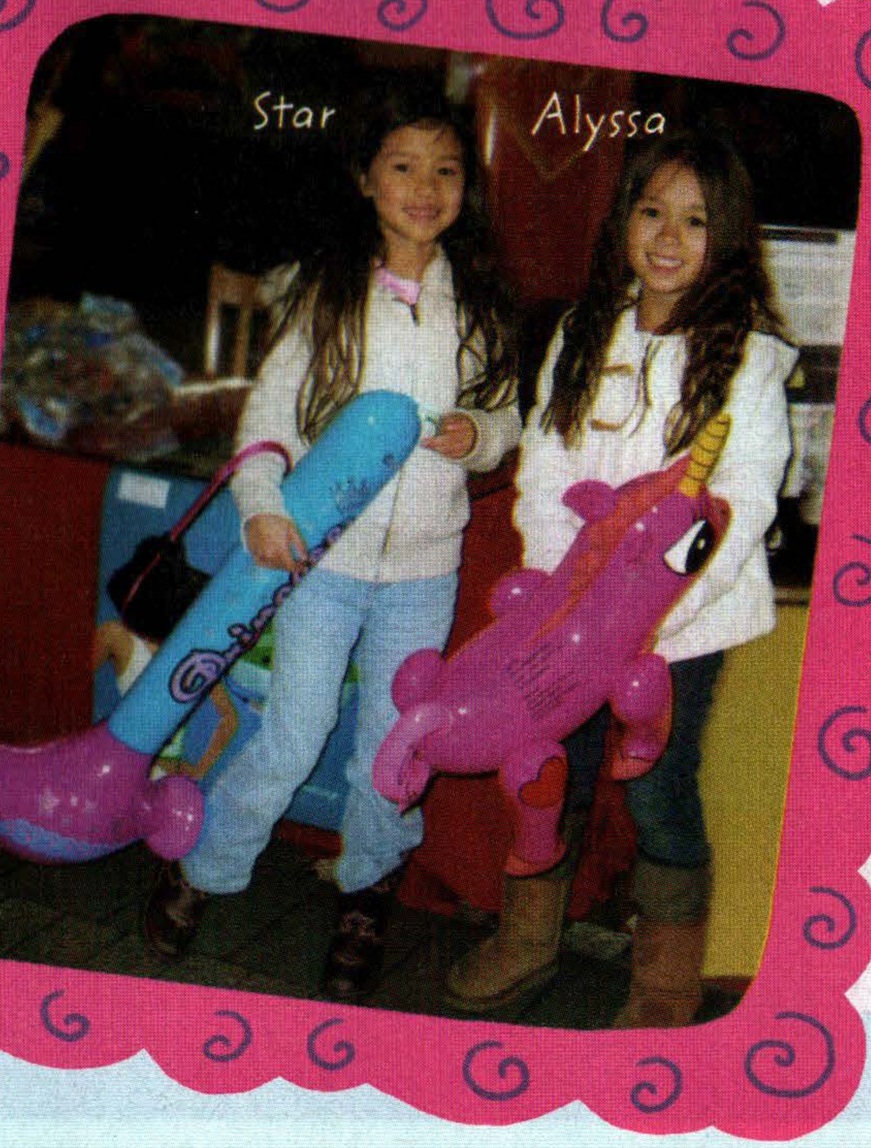
"I met my three closest friends on the same day. Hannah, Courtney, and Monica can always tell how I'm feeling, and we all have exactly the same sense of humor. I was so sad when I had to move far away from them, but I know that we'll always be close."

Abby E.
Age 10, South Carolina

I'm thankful for a friend who's my "twin."

"My best friend, Star, and I are in the same grade at the same school, and people always mistake me for her. One day we ran into each other and found out that we live in the same complex! We have so much fun together. I'm happy that I met her."

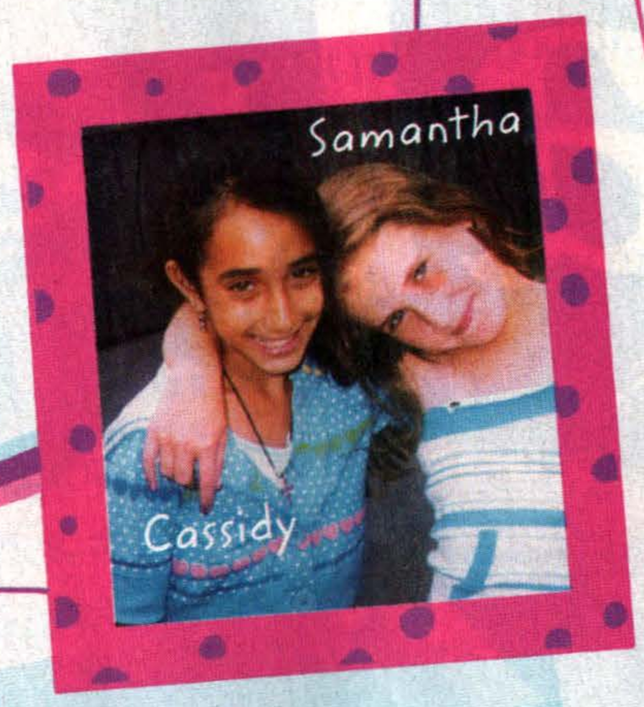
Alyssa H.
Age 7, California



I'm thankful for a friend who's like family.

"Whenever I go over to Cassidy's house, her grandma hugs me and her mom treats me as if I'm her own daughter. She even gives Cassidy and me chores sometimes! But I don't mind—it just makes me feel welcome. I don't know what I'd do without Cassidy."

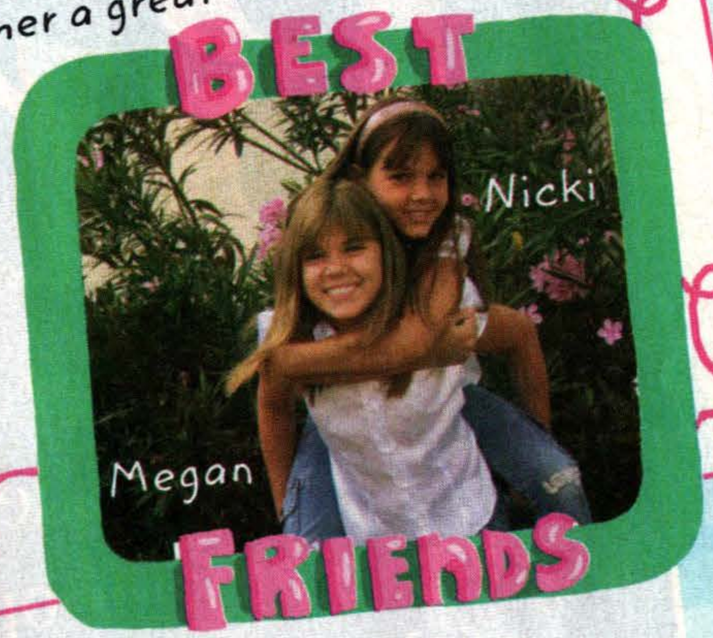
Samantha R.
Age 11, Massachusetts



I'm thankful for a sister who's a friend, too.

"My best friend is my sister, Nicki. We do everything together. We like a lot of the same things, such as soccer and camping. Because she's family, I know that I can always count on her to help me up when I'm down. But that makes her a great friend, too."

Megan S.
Age 13, Texas



I'm thankful for a friend who's always there for me.

"When my grandmother died, Kelsey helped me through it all. She was there for me when I would cry at recess, and other times she'd find ways to make me laugh. When her own grandma died, I did the same things for her. I'm glad we had each other."

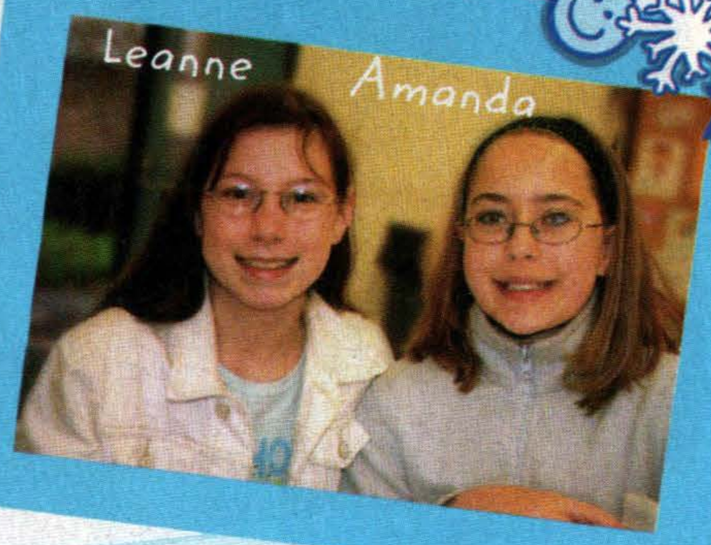
Kiersten O.
Age 10, Hawaii



I'm thankful that opposites really *do* attract sometimes.

"I met Amanda on the first day of kindergarten. I don't remember how it happened, but we clicked right away. Our personalities are completely different, but it just means that we balance each other out. When we're having fun, there's no stopping us!"

Leanne S.
Age 13, Connecticut



Illustrations: Cathi Mingus

Unlucky Break

Kacie had learned her lines, had studied the songs, and was ready for opening night of the musical—until a backstage tumble changed everything.

Photos: © Star Tribune 2008

I'm an actor. Some kids play sports or study music or do other hobbies, but acting is my sport. I spend a ton of time in rehearsals and at shows. I don't mind, though, because being in the theater is really important to me.

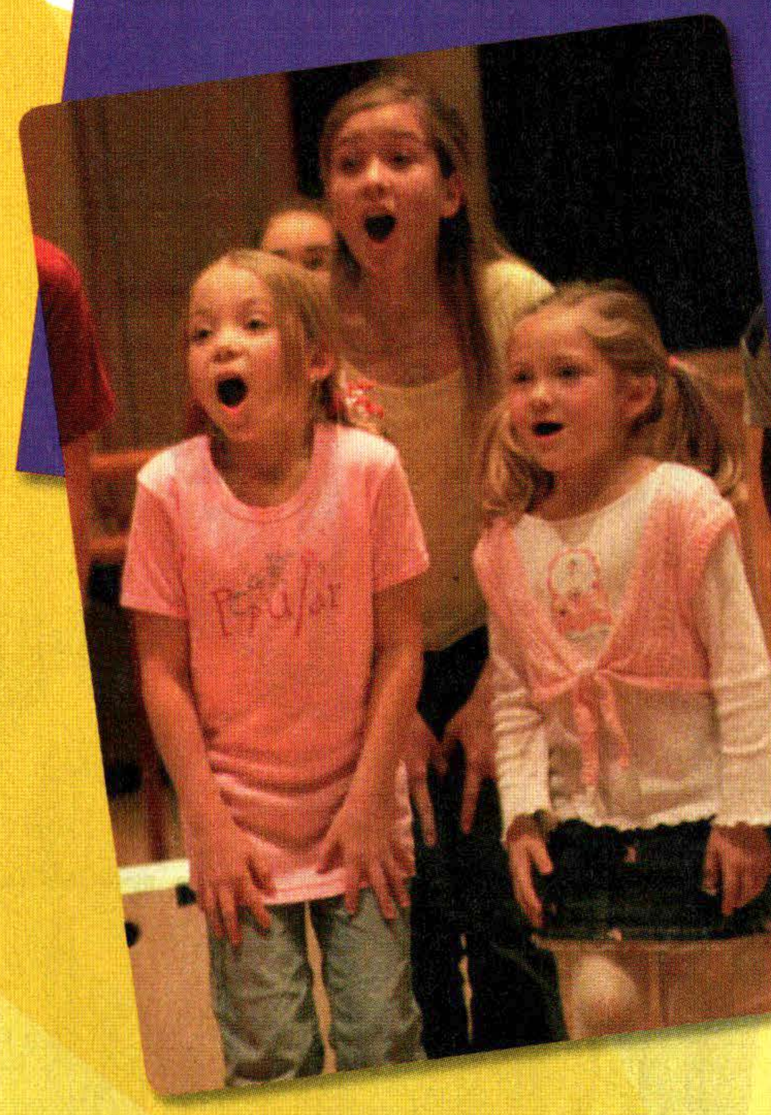
I did my first play when I was seven, and I was hooked. Last Christmas, I was getting ready for a new role in *The Sound of Music*—so exciting! After the auditions, I had been cast as Marta, one of the seven von Trapp children. I had learned lines and song lyrics, and I had studied the choreography and the directions for what to do when I was onstage. I was only nine, but I would be performing with a cast of great actors, and the show was going to open at a beautiful theater downtown.

Still, rehearsals were long and tiring. We all worked really hard to learn everything we needed to know to make the show a success. I missed some school to go to rehearsals, and sometimes I was at the theater until really late at night.

Two days before audiences would see the show for the first time, the cast and crew were in a tech rehearsal. That meant that we were trying to do the show for real, with costumes, lighting, and no breaks in the action. I had run backstage to change out of one costume into a pretty white party dress for my next scene.

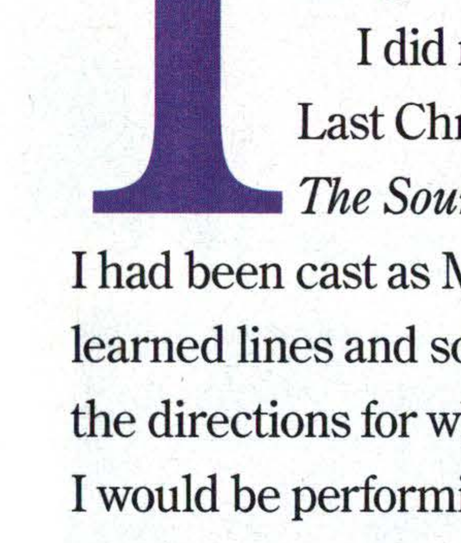
As I waited for my cue, another girl and I were playing around backstage. We were hugging each other excitedly to wish each other luck, but something weird happened. We kind of got tangled up, and we toppled over. At first I thought I was fine. But then my leg started to HURT, and I started to cry.

What was wrong with me?



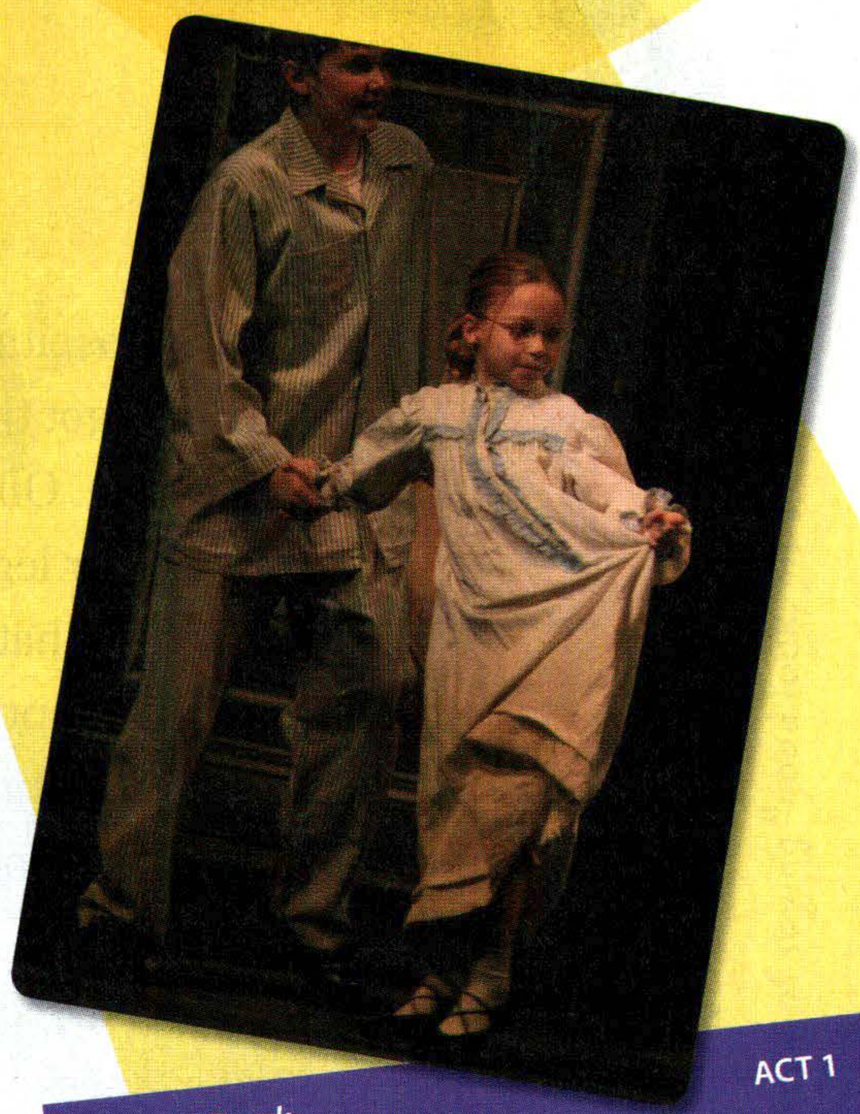
Unlucky Break ACT 1

I loved hanging out with the other kids in the cast who were playing my brothers and sisters. We had so much fun.



Unlucky Break ACT 1

Rehearsals were fun, but they were hard work.



Unlucky Break ACT 1

We had started rehearsing in our costumes, and the show was about to open.



At the hospital a few hours later, I got the worst news possible. One of the bones in my lower leg was broken! I'd thought that maybe it would be just a sprain and that I'd be fine in time for opening night. But the minute my mom and the doctors told me that my leg was broken, I knew that the show was over for me. Sure, my leg hurt, but this time I was crying out of sadness.

I went home to the couch and had to be carried everywhere I went. After a few days, I got a cast that went all the way up to my thigh. I liked that my cast was hot pink, and it was cool that everyone wanted to sign it, but I hated the cast. It was itchy, and it was a constant reminder that I wouldn't be in the show. I tried crutches, but they made me nervous, so I started using a wheelchair to get around.

Everyone in the show was so sorry to hear the news. I got tons of cards and visitors. I wouldn't be performing in the show, but the director called to invite me to take a bow on opening night with everyone else. That was nice, and it made me feel a little better, even though my *understudy*, another actor who had been learning my role just in case, would be doing the role of Marta in my place.

Backstage on opening night, I got a huge card signed by people from the show. It was so strange to watch the action from the side of the stage, where no one in the audience could see me. I kept hearing my cues, and it was always my instinct to go onstage to perform before I remembered that I couldn't.

At the end of the show, I was carried onstage to bow with the rest of the cast. The audience clapped so loudly for me. As the curtain came down on this show, I couldn't help but feel that sometime soon, another curtain would come up for me. My leg would heal, and I'd audition for another part. I decided right then that my next break would be a lucky one. ★



Unlucky Break ACT 3

Lots of people from the cast and crew signed a big card—funnily enough, it was the same color as the cast on my leg.



Unlucky Break ACT 3

This wasn't how I had imagined going onstage for opening night. But it was nice to be able to bow with everyone.

Instead of saying "good luck," it's a tradition for actors to tell one another to "break a leg." They don't actually mean it, though!

American Girl

Holiday Hoopla!

The holidays are a lot of fun—and can be a little crazy, too! Play this game with your family at holiday gatherings.

NOVEMBER

START

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2	3	Holiday Hoopla!	5	6	Holiday Hoopla!	8
9	10	Holiday Hoopla!	12	Holiday Hoopla!	14	Holiday Hoopla!
Holiday Hoopla!	17	18	Holiday Hoopla!	20	Holiday Hoopla!	22
23	Holiday Hoopla!	25	Holiday Hoopla!	Thanksgiving	28	Holiday Hoopla!
30						

DECEMBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	Holiday Hoopla!	3	4	Holiday Hoopla!	6
7	Holiday Hoopla!	9	Holiday Hoopla!	11	Holiday Hoopla!	13
Holiday Hoopla!	15	16	17	Holiday Hoopla!	19	Holiday Hoopla!
Hanukkah	Holiday Hoopla!	23	24	Christmas	Kwanzaa	27
Holiday Hoopla!	29	Holiday Hoopla!	New Year's Eve	January 1st FINISH		

Illustrations: Janell Genovese

Peppermint Pals

These mini mints are as fun to eat as they are to make!

Peppermint Pals

Use this simple dough recipe to make your pals.

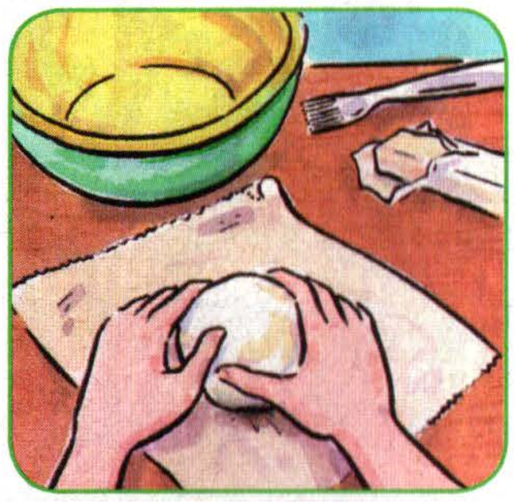
YOU WILL NEED

For the Animals

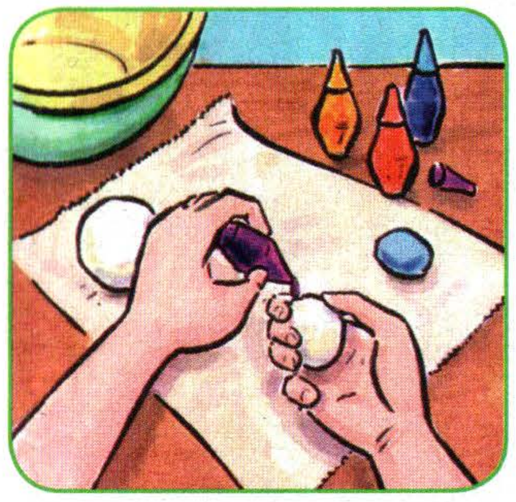
- Butter
- Light corn syrup
- Salt
- Mint extract
- Powdered sugar
- Wax paper
- Blue, purple, red, and yellow food coloring
- Candy sprinkles

For the Trees

- An adult to help you
- Spearmint leaf candies
- Ice cream sugar cones
- Creamy white frosting



1 Wash your hands. In a bowl, use a fork to mix 1 tablespoon softened butter (do not use margarine), 1 tablespoon light corn syrup, 1/8 teaspoon salt, and 1/2 teaspoon mint extract. Gradually add about 1 cup powdered sugar to the mix one spoonful at a time. Patiently knead dough with hands on wax paper and continue adding powdered sugar.



2 Set aside half of dough. Divide remaining dough in half. Knead 1 drop blue food coloring into one half. Wash hands. Knead 1 drop purple food coloring into other half. Wash hands. To make orange dough for penguin beaks, pinch a marble-sized ball of white dough and knead 1 drop of yellow and 1 drop of red food coloring into it. Wash hands.



For the polar bear:

Stack 2 white marble-sized balls of dough on wax paper to make body and head. Press on candy sprinkles for eyes. Form a nose and a scarf, hat, or earmuffs out of colored dough. Press features in place. Form ears by pinching 2 tiny pieces from dough. Roll into balls and place on top of head. Store mints in refrigerator.



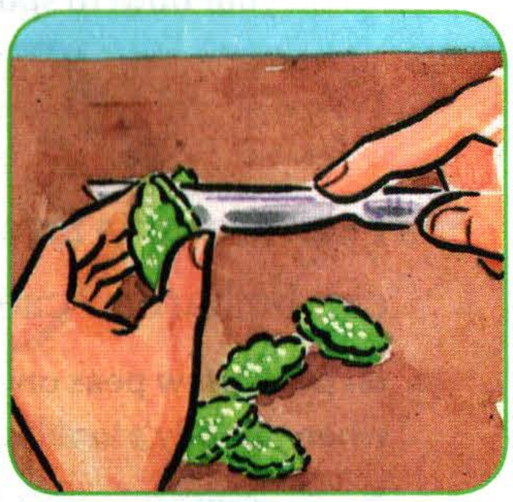
For the penguin:

Place 1 white marble-sized ball of dough on wax paper to make body. Stack 1 blue marble-sized ball of dough on top to make head. Form 2 wings out of blue dough and attach them to sides of body. Press on candy sprinkles for eyes. Form a beak and a scarf, hat, or earmuffs out of colored dough. Press them in place. Store mints in refrigerator. ★

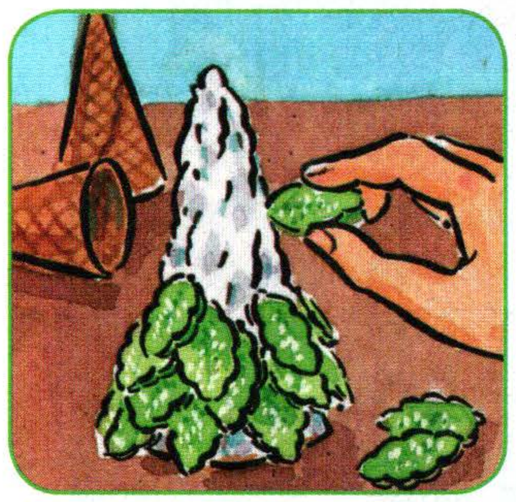
Frosty Forest

Make sparkly trees to complete your scene.





1 To make a tree, ask an adult to slice leaf candies in half so that they are half as thick. Each candy will give you 2 thin leaves.



2 Turn a cone upside down. Spread on a thick layer of frosting covering the entire cone. Let frosting set for 5 minutes. Starting at the bottom, press a row of leaves into the frosting. Add more leaves, overlapping the rows as you move up the cone.

Polar bears' home is the Arctic, while penguins live in Antarctica.

Illustrations: Shawn Banner

Quiz

Right or Rude?

There's more to manners than "please" and "thank you." See if you know what to do in these tricky table situations.

by Brette Sember

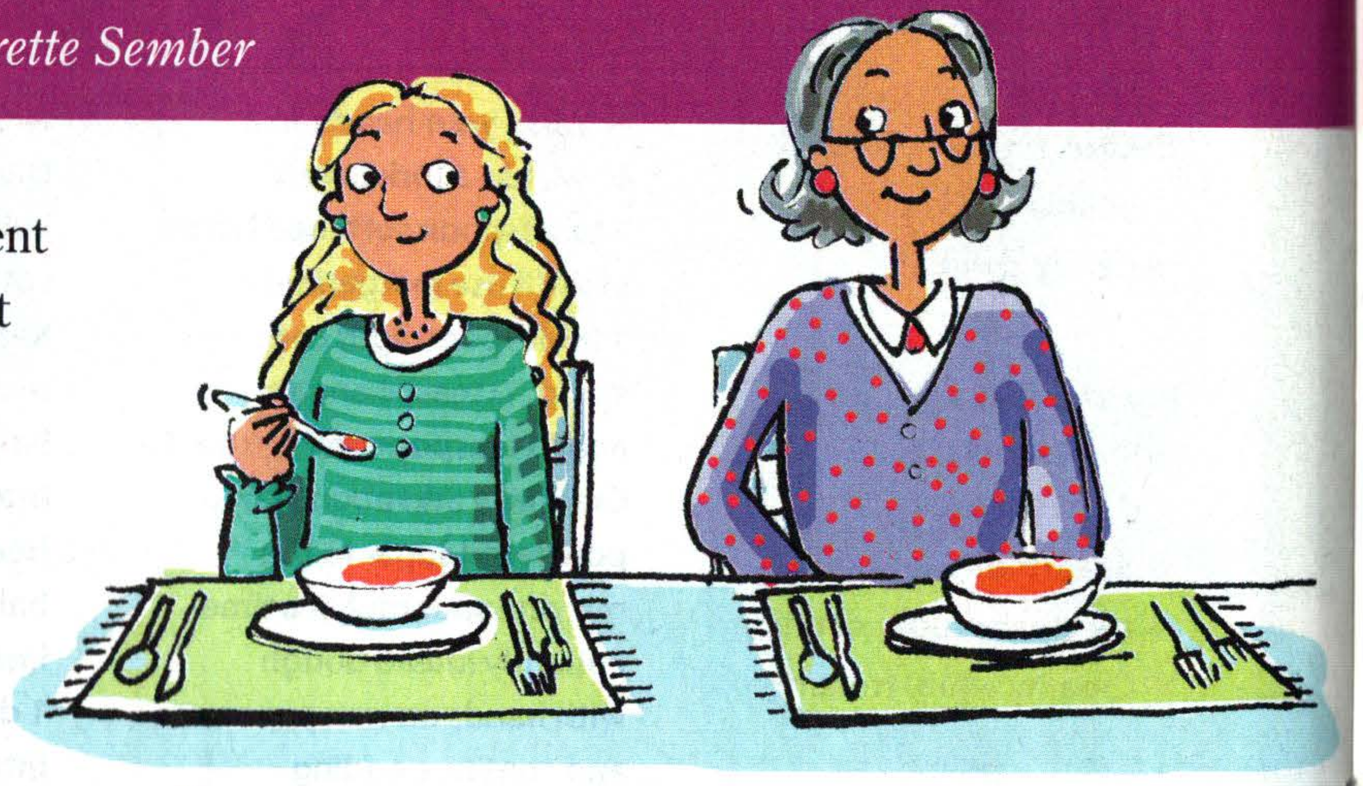
1. At your friend's birthday party, it's the moment you've been waiting for—the cake. But is that CARROT cake? Gross! You …

a. take a small slice and give it a try. Maybe the frosting will be yummy.

b. announce that you don't do veggies in your dessert and say, "No, thanks!"

c. *very* politely ask your friend's mom for a different kind of cake.





3. Aunt Emily is serving her new soup recipe. You impress her by remembering to …

a. daintily scoop the soup toward yourself (that's the proper way to eat soup, you know).

b. blow lightly on each spoonful before you eat it.

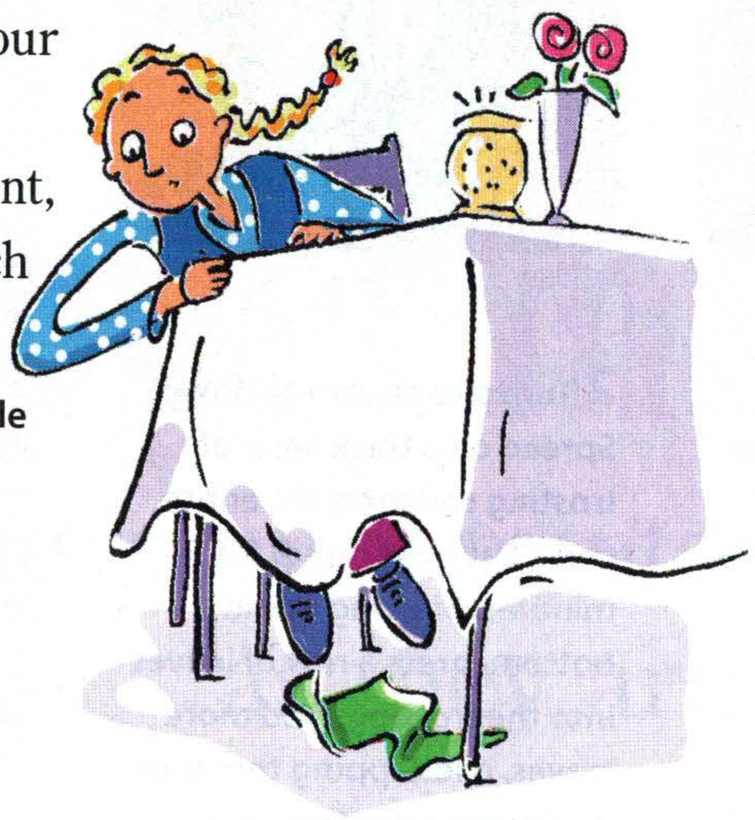
c. tilt your bowl to spoon up the last scrumptious drop!

2. Oops! You drop your napkin under the table at a restaurant, and you can't reach it. You should …

a. crawl under the table and get it.

b. ask for a new one.

c. use your brother's.

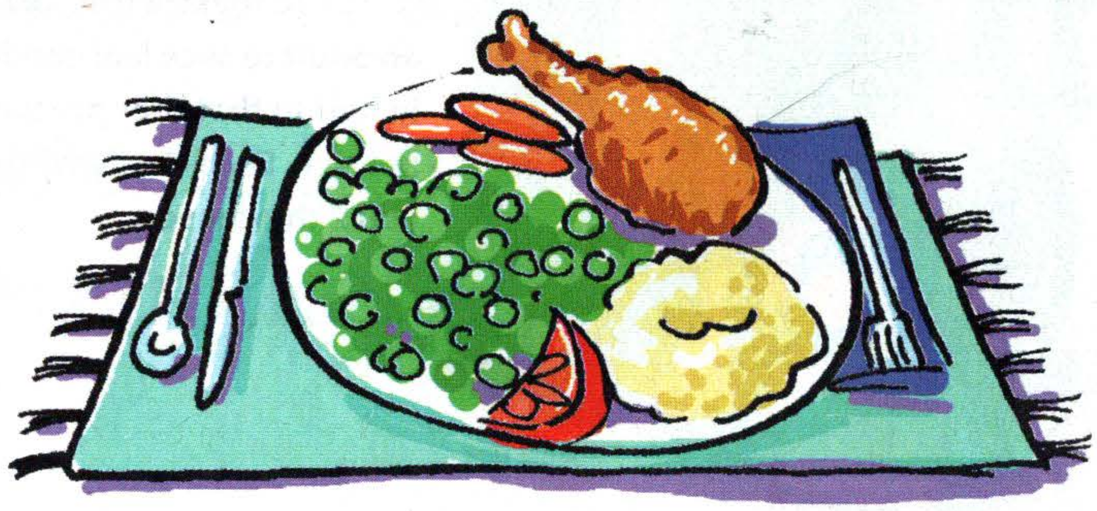


4. Peas are your favorite green veggie, but they can be hard to catch! To eat them, you should …

a. push a few peas onto your fork with your finger—when nobody's looking, of course.

b. carefully use your knife to corral the peas onto your fork.

c. stab the peas with your fork.





5. After your soccer game, the team heads to the pizza place for the all-you-can-eat buffet. When you go back to the buffet for another slice, you…

a. bring your plate with you. The dish washer will appreciate having fewer dishes to clean.

b. start with a clean plate each time you return to the buffet. Who wants to use a dirty dish?

c. leave your plate at the table. Walk up to the buffet and grab a slice—it *is* finger food, after all.

6. You're at a party. Your stomach is growling, but there's no sign of food yet. You…

a. look around and ask in a funny way, "So, when ARE we eating?"

b. duck into the kitchen and try to sneak a snack.

c. ask your friend's mom for a little something to tide you over.





Answers

1. a. It's fine to pass on side dishes that you don't care for, but the main dish—such as cake at a birthday party—at least deserves a taste. If you try the cake and don't like it, then make it *look* like you ate some of it by cutting it into smaller pieces. And remember that it's not O.K. to place a special order at someone else's bash.

2. b. It's perfectly O.K. to ask for a new napkin.

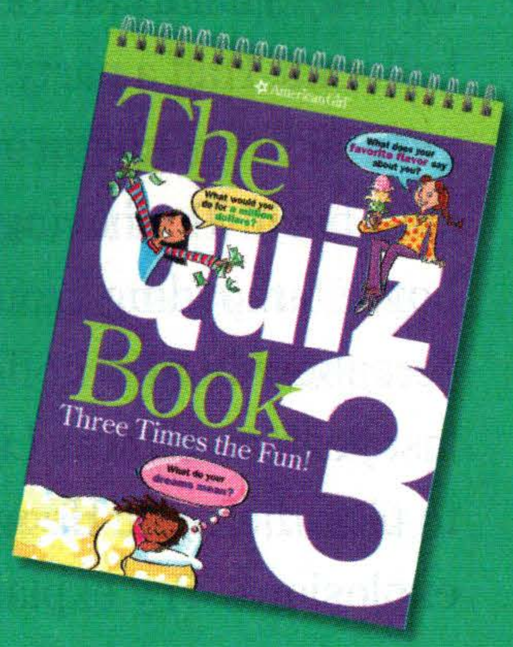
3. c. Believe it or not, it's acceptable to tip your soup bowl slightly to get the last bit of soup. Never blow on hot soup, though—stir it to cool it down. And, etiquette experts say, the proper way to eat soup is to fill your spoon by scooping it *away* from you.

4. b. This is one to practice at home. Holding your fork in one hand and the knife in the other, scoot those peas onto your fork. Even better, use your chicken or potatoes as a wall to fence in your peas. That will help you catch them.

5. b. There are actually health laws in most places that require you to take a new plate each time you visit a buffet. So, even if you cleaned your plate, you need to start with a fresh one for each trip to the buffet.

6. c. This is a sticky situation to be in, for sure. If you really can't wait, go ahead and ask your friend's mom to help you out, but try not to make a big fuss. ★

More fun quizzes can be found in **The Quiz Book 3,** available in bookstores.



Illustrations: Lauren Scheuer

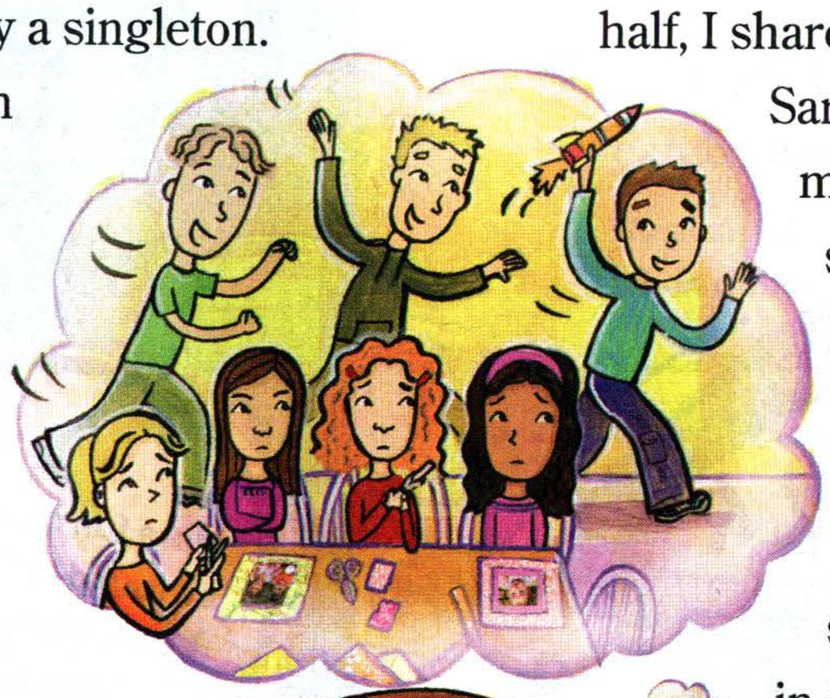
Double Trouble

This year, Ruby's birthday is full of surprises.

by Carolyn Mackler

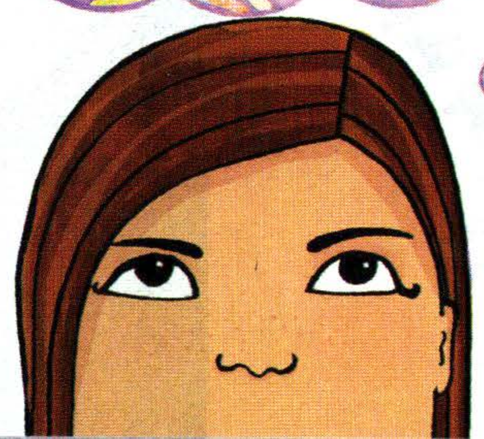
My birthday is always a letdown. I have to share it with my twin brother, Liam. Whoever says that twins are double the pleasure is definitely a singleton.

When you share a birthday with your sibling, it's halfsies all the way. Half a cake. Half the balloons. Half a party. Every year, our parents throw us a joint bash. Try having seven boys stampeding around your scrapbooking party. That was last year, and it was Liam's turn to pick the cake. He went with space explosions. Try explaining to your friends why they have to eat a meteor crashing into the moon.



To make matters worse, we were born on December 20th. Five days before Christmas. So while I'm already dealing with a birthday hacked in half, I share it with Christmas. My best friend, Sarabeth, once said, "Ruby, don't get me wrong. You're an amazing person eleven months a year, but you get so grouchy in December."

Sarabeth's birthday is in June. Six whole months away from Christmas. School's still on, so she gets birthday attention in class, but the weather is warm enough to have an outdoor party. Sarabeth lives way out in the country.



Last June, for her tenth birthday, her parents took us for a speedboat ride. We went to a marina and ate ice cream cones with rainbow sprinkles.

No wonder I'm grouchy in December. I happen to think I have a doubly good reason.



This year, it's all going to be different. Liam and I are turning ten. Right after Thanksgiving, our parents summoned us into the dining room. I sat in my regular chair, facing the window into the backyard. The wind was swirling the rusty-brown leaves around the swing set.

"We want to talk about your birthday," Mom said.

"Your first double-digit year," Dad added.

"Can we have an insect party?" Liam asked.

"No, thanks!" I said as I pictured my friends covered in fake spiders.



"Why not? We've never done it before," Liam said. "Besides, I went along with scrapbooking last year."

"Yeah, but we had a meteor cake," I replied. "Remember?"

"Kids!" my mom interrupted. "We're not having a party this year."

"What?" I asked, leaning forward.

Dad grinned. "Yep. And no presents, either."

I couldn't believe it. I looked at Liam. He was as shocked as I was.

Mom touched my arm. "Rube," she said gently. "Hang on a second."

I listened as Dad explained how, for our birthday weekend, they were taking us to New York City.

My heart started pounding. We live in a small town near Cleveland, almost 500 miles from the Big Apple. For my whole life, I've been begging to go to New York City at Christmastime. I want to see the tree at Rockefeller Center, look at the famous decorations on Fifth Avenue, maybe even ride the elevator to the top of the Empire State Building. I've heard that in December, they light the skyscraper in green and red.

My mom always says it's too expensive. In New York City, she explains, a sandwich costs double what it does in Ohio. There goes double again—and not in a good way!

But this year my parents are splurging. Our birthday lands on a Saturday, so we're flying out of Cleveland that morning. We'll have the rest of the day in the city. My parents made a dinner reservation for us that night at a fancy restaurant. We'll sleep in a hotel, have a morning in the city, and fly home on Sunday afternoon.

Illustrations: Jennifer Kalis

I was so shocked, I couldn't speak, and that's saying a lot for me.

"Can we go to the planetarium?" Liam asked.



He's still really into astronomy. I appreciate the night sky as much as the next person, but put me in a planetarium and I'm snoring within seconds.

"It's your weekend," Mom said. "We can do whatever you want."

Normally, I'd say it would be a crime to spend our precious hours sitting in the dark, but I was so excited that I didn't care what we did. If Liam wanted to visit a Dumpster in New York City, I would have clapped enthusiastically and bellowed, "Show me the trash!"

Hands down, this was going to be the best birthday ever.



For the next three weeks, the trip was all I could think about. When my dad took us to the library, I only checked out books that were set in New York City. Sarabeth collects snow globes, so I promised I'd get one for her with the Statue of Liberty inside. My mom and I spent an evening on the computer locating directions to the Empire State Building, looking up the hours of the ice-skating rink, and making a list of shop windows we had to visit. She even printed out the menu for the fancy restaurant. Every night at dinner, I used my best fake British accent as I pretended to order "rosemary chicken" or "spaghetti alla marinara."



Speaking of the restaurant, a week before the trip, my mom took me to the mall to choose a dress to wear for our fancy dinner on the town. Normally I'd go straight for the bright colors, but this time, I chose a medium-length black velvet dress with a red-trimmed neckline—perfect for a night in the city.

Three days before the trip, I picked out my clothes and packed my suitcase.

Two days before the trip, I set my alarm early and practiced getting ready in time for our flight.

And then, on the day before the trip, it started to snow.

The forecasters said a storm was heading into Ohio, but they thought it would go north of us. I was sitting in school on Friday, daydreaming about Rockefeller Center, when the principal came on the intercom with an announcement.

"A blizzard is coming, so we're ending the school day early," she said. "All students should get their jackets and file out to the buses."

I knew, deep down, that it didn't look good.

I looked over at Sarabeth. She smiled sympathetically and whispered, "Sometimes the weather people are wrong, you know."

When we got outside, it was already snowing—heavy, wet flakes that had every intention of sticking. As Sarabeth and I waved goodbye, she said, "It might melt overnight."



I stepped onto the bus. I could hear Liam and his friends in the back, hooting about the unexpected snow day. As I sat down, I clenched my fists. Didn't Liam know that when a storm hits, you can end up with huge snowdrifts? Didn't he realize that the airport would shut down? Didn't he care?

When we got off the bus, our dad met us in the driveway. Liam ran past us and into the garage to get his sled.

"Mom's on her way home from work," Dad explained to me.

"It's not looking good, is it?" I asked.

"We can't tell yet," he said.

My mom got home a half-hour later. I was sitting in the living room, staring out the window.

"It's not looking good," I said glumly.

"Well, at this point, the flight is still scheduled," Mom said.

By late afternoon, though, the snow was still coming down. At dinner, when I said to my parents that it wasn't looking good, they just looked at each other and said, "We'll see."

Before I got into bed, I glanced at my new black velvet dress hanging on the closet door. I wondered if I'd actually be able to wear it tomorrow. The rest of my family seemed to believe that this trip was still possible, but I knew, deep down, that it didn't look good.

I set my alarm for seven the next morning. When I woke up, I didn't think, *It's my birthday!* I didn't think, *I'm ten today!* All I could think, as I surveyed the mountains of glaring snow, was, *There's no way an airplane is leaving Cleveland anytime soon.*



My mom opened my door. "I heard your alarm," she said.

She was still in her bathrobe. Usually, on the morning of a trip, my mom is showered and dressed, ready to corral everyone out the door.

"The flight is cancelled, Ruby," my mom said.

I dove back into bed. My mom sat next to me, rubbing my shoulders. I pressed my face into the pillow and cried.

From there, things got worse. When I came down for breakfast, my dad told me that the roads were so icy, he couldn't even take the car out to buy last-minute presents. To top it off, when I tried calling Sarabeth, the phone lines were down.

As I slowly spooned up cereal, my dad said to Liam and me, "Let's talk about your birthday."

"What's there to say?" I grumbled.

"It's terrible that our trip's been cancelled," Mom said, looking right at me. "We know how disappointed you are. But since we're stuck here today, and it is your birthday, we were thinking that you two could make presents for each other."

I groaned.

"Well, what would you like to do?" Dad asked.



"We could go sledding," Liam interrupted. "Or we could have a snowball fight."

I made a face. A snowball fight was not, I mean *not,* how I wanted to spend my birthday.

"I hate to say it," Liam said, "but Ruby's being a brat."

And that's when I lost it. "Just because you don't care about your birthday," I shouted, "doesn't mean you can ruin mine!"

Liam scowled. "I'm not—"

"Yes, you are!"

"Kids!" my dad said. I was so angry, I could barely keep it in.

"Ruby," my mom said after a second. "Why don't you go to your room to cool off?"

"Fine," I said, getting up and dumping my bowl into the sink. The rest of my family went back to eating, as if I didn't even exist.

Hands down, this was shaping up to be the worst birthday ever!

I lay on my bed for a long time. I could hear a snowplow scraping the street. Then I heard Dad and Liam laughing in the backyard. As I listened to their voices, I felt awful. I knew I'd acted like a brat at breakfast. No denying that. I couldn't believe how selfish I'd been. Then again, I really wanted to have a special birthday this year. I reached into my suitcase and



pulled out the packet of information my mom had printed for me. I glanced at the page about the Hayden Planetarium—Liam's one request. My parents had gotten tickets for an afternoon show, which of course we were going to miss.

I sighed heavily and thought about how today was Liam's birthday, too. Even though I was miserable, I had to make an effort to do something for him. Then I had an idea.

I rolled out of bed and walked to the top of the stairs. I could hear my mom in the kitchen.

"Mom?" I called out, sitting on the top step. "Can you please come up here?"

My mom appeared at the bottom of the stairs, wiping her hands on a dish towel. "What's up?"

"I just…" I slid down a few steps. "I'm sorry about before," I said, staring down at my knees.

Mom leaned in and gave me a tight hug. "Don't worry about it, Rube. I know how much you were looking forward to the trip. Sometimes I wish I could control the universe a little bit more, too."

"Maybe we can," I said slyly. "Will you help me make something for Liam?"

"What did you have in mind?"

I grinned. "Where's that glow-in-the-dark paint you bought for the curb last summer?"

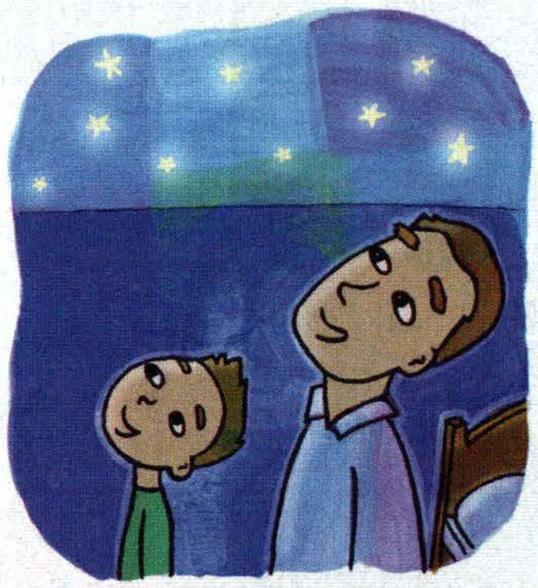
"It's in the basement," my mom said. "May I ask where this is heading?"

I shook my head. "I'll carry the paint if you bring up the stepladder." Then I laughed and bounded down the stairs.



When we gathered in the living room a few hours later, I could barely sit still. Before anyone could speak, I blurted out, "Follow me!"

Everyone came up to Liam's room. I'd already closed the curtains and turned off the light. As we stepped into the darkness, I said, "Look up."



My mom was smiling as my dad and Liam glanced at the ceiling, now covered in stars. I had flipped through one of Liam's astronomy books, looking at maps of the major constellations. My mom had perched on the stepladder, brush in hand, as I directed her where to paint the stars.

"There's the Big Dipper," Liam said. "And Orion. And even Cassiopeia!"

"Who knew there were so many constellations?" I asked.

"Eighty-eight, to be exact," Liam said. We both laughed, and he slung his arm around my shoulders, squeezing a little.

As we headed downstairs, Liam told us to grab our coats and boots and come into the backyard. When I stepped onto the deck, I clapped my hand over my mouth. Liam had built a snowman that looked like the Statue of Liberty, complete with a crown and a torch. Dad had helped him string white lights on our oak tree ("Not the Rockefeller Center tree," Liam said, "but close.") and green and red lights on the swing set ("Just like the Empire State Building!"). And then, next to the swings, there was this huge mound of snow with a twig poking out of the top.

I gestured to it. "And that is...?"

"The Big Apple, of course!" Liam said, grinning.

I had to laugh. If I couldn't be in New York City, this was the next best thing.

After a few minutes, we clomped back inside. My parents instructed Liam and me to change into our nicest clothes and meet in the dining room in ten minutes.

"Wear your black velvet, Ruby!" Mom said as I headed upstairs.

I stepped into my special new dress, and I even put on the tights and shoes that my mom had gotten for me. My dad met me at the entrance to the dining room. He had on a white shirt, a tie, and black pants. He took my arm and led me to the table. I couldn't believe it! My parents had transformed our dining room into a fancy restaurant. They'd put



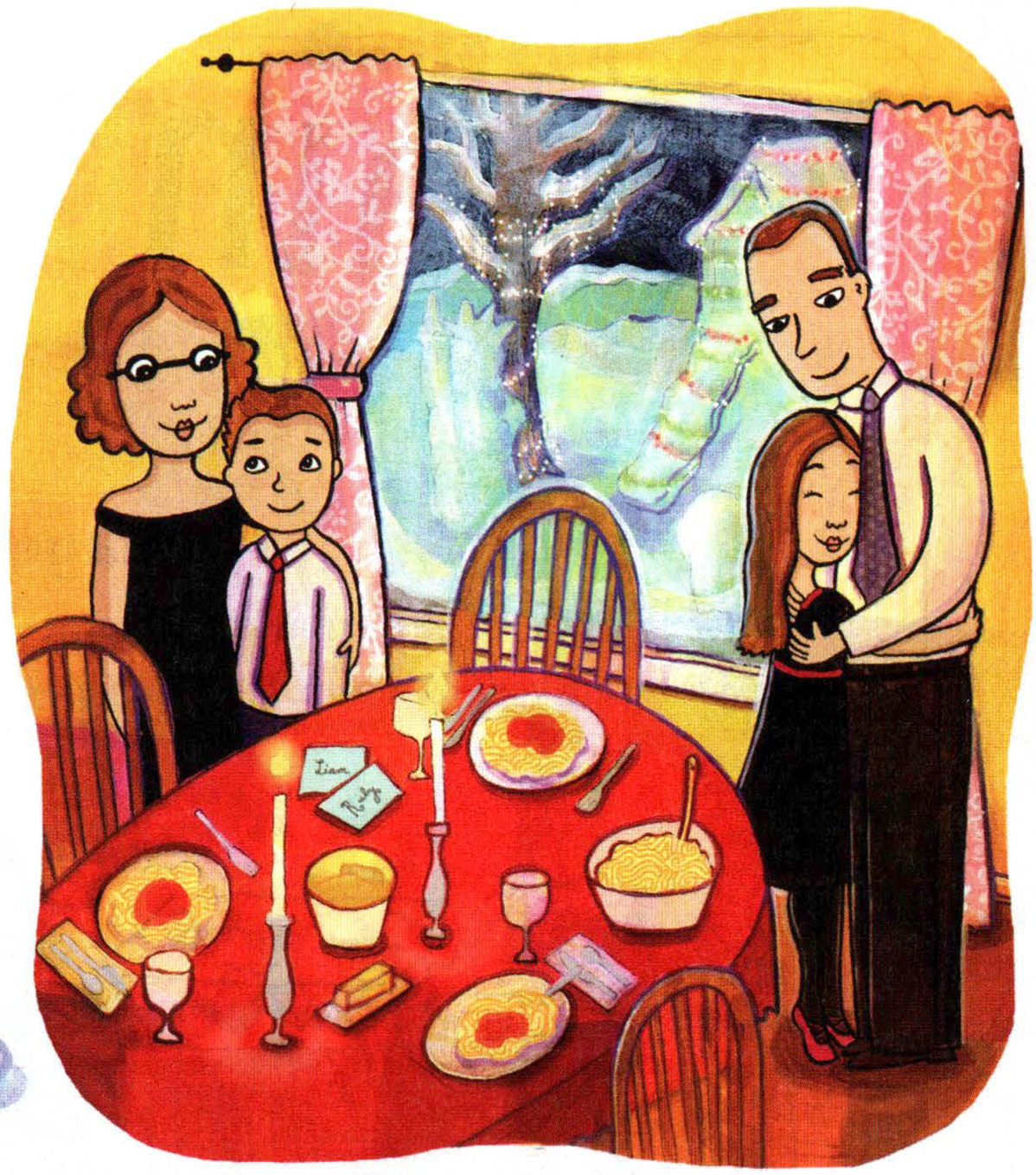
out a tablecloth and tall candles, and they even had soft music playing on the stereo.

Once Liam and I were seated, Mom brought out a tray of steaming bowls. "Spaghetti alla marinara!" she said.

Dad followed with a basket of breadsticks. "Baguettes!" he chimed.

As my dad stood above me, sprinkling cheese on my noodles just like a real waiter, I couldn't stop laughing. I glanced out at the backyard, at my own

I realized I was getting a double birthday celebration this year.



personal Statue of Liberty and the twinkling lights on the swing set. I thought about how today was different from what I had been hoping for, but I was definitely having a great time.

Toward the end of dinner, Mom pulled out two envelopes—one for Liam and one for me. I tore into mine and quickly read the paper inside. It was a reservation for us to fly from Cleveland to New York City next weekend!



"It'll be after Christmas," Dad said, "but they'll still have the decorations up."

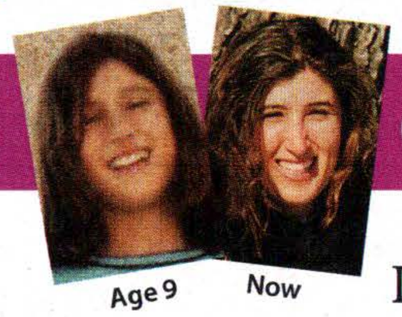
I pushed back my chair and ran to hug my mom and dad.

"There's one more paper," Mom said when I finally sat down.

Liam and I both reached into our envelopes. My parents had included the weather forecast for the upcoming week. It was going to be sunny, with temperatures reaching the mid-40s. That meant the snow would melt in time for our trip.

As I twirled my last bite of spaghetti, I realized I was getting a double birthday celebration this year—one today and one next weekend. I have to admit, I was doubly excited. ★

Meet the Author



Carolyn Mackler

I was born on July 13th. While I sometimes wished that I had my big day during the school year so that I could bring in cupcakes, I loved having a summer birthday. Also, I was born on a Friday the 13th. I've always considered it a lucky day!

Brainwaves

activities and puzzles

Village Voyage

Try to complete all of your errands downtown without crossing your own path. You can make your stops in any order you like, and you can carry as many things as you need to.



Today's Errands

- ☐ Listen to Alaina's caroling group.
- ☐ Stop at the candy store.
- ☐ Drop money in the charity kettle.
- ☐ Buy a gift for Mom.
- ☐ Mail greeting cards.
- ☐ Check out toy-store window display.
- ☐ Get a hot chocolate.

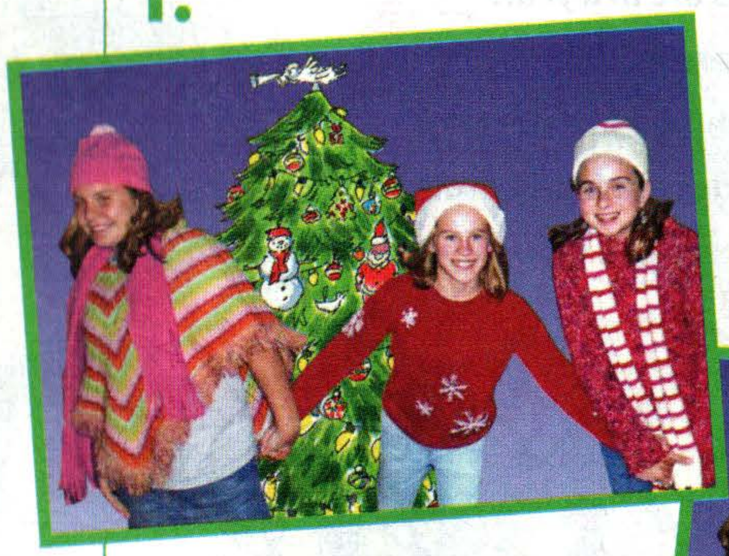


Illustrations: Paul Meisel

Photo Fun

Let it snow! Find the matching pair of pictures sent in by Jessica, Robyn, and Natalie of Texas.

1.



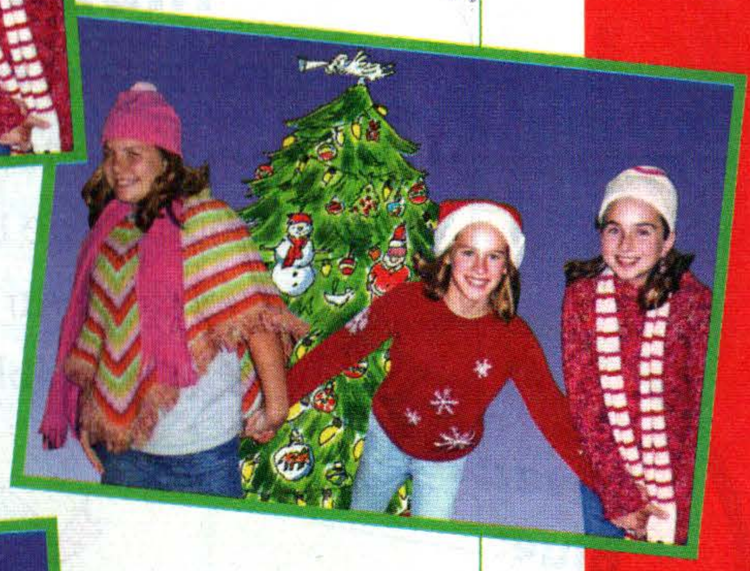
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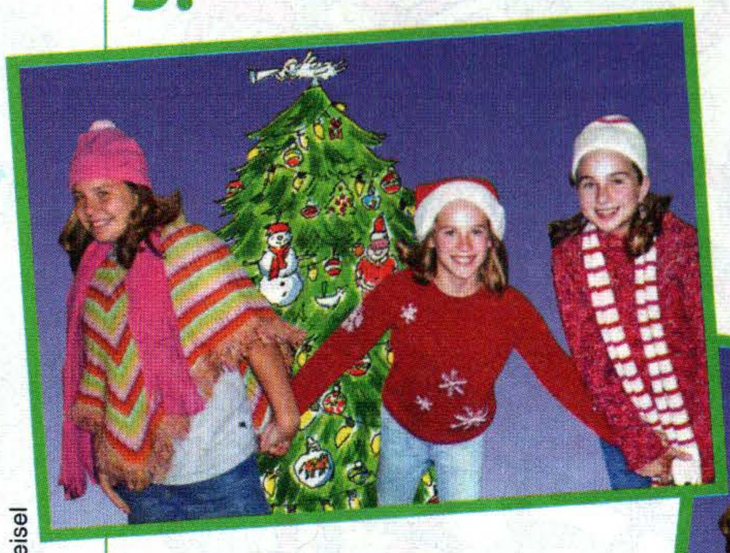
3.



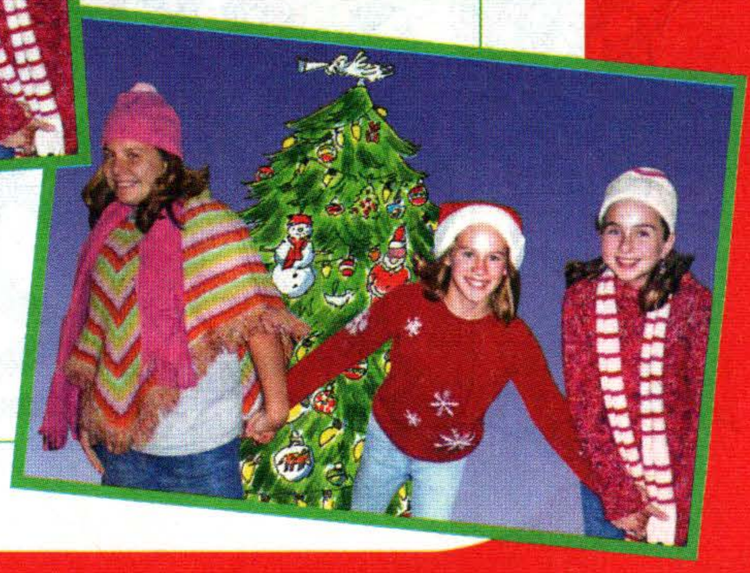
4.



5.



6.



New Year's Numbers

Answer these questions to count down to the new year.

1. How many weeks are in a year? __ __
2. How many days are in 2008? __ __ __
3. How many months are in a decade? __ __ __
4. How many decades are in a century? __ __
5. How many years are in a millennium? __ __ __ __



What's for Dessert?

Find out by studying the way these letters and words are arranged.

1. EEEEEEE _____
2. 

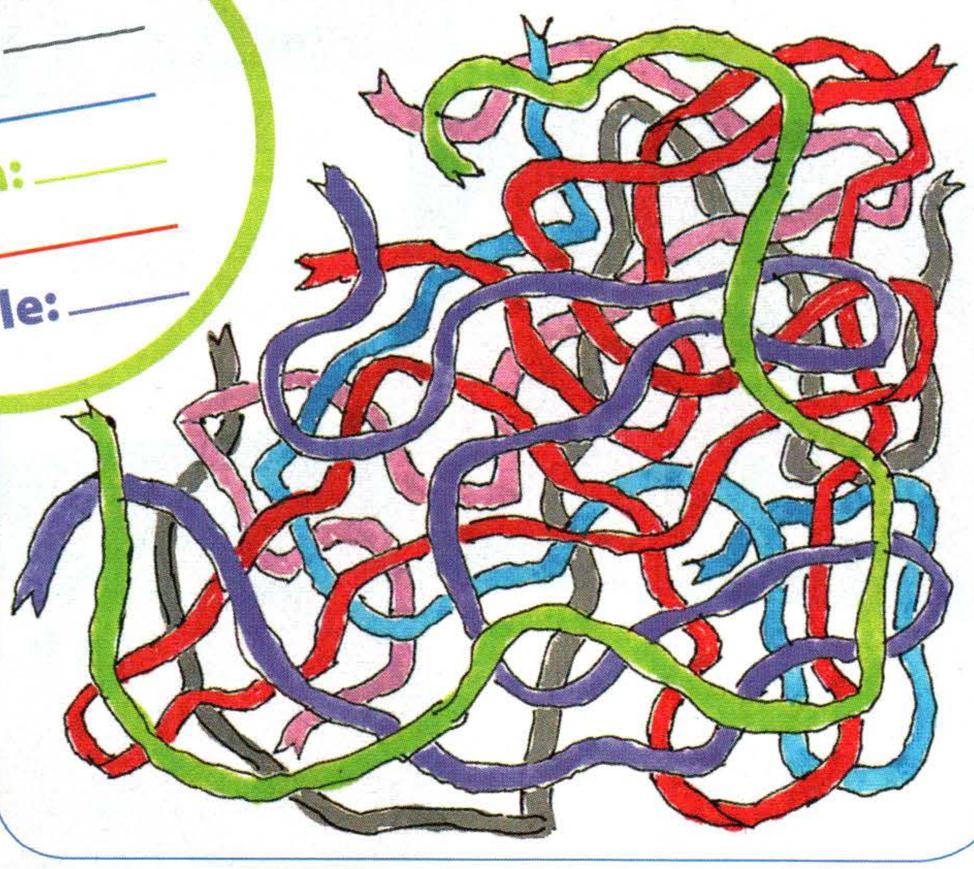
3. 

4. PINEAPPLE CAKE _____
5. PIpumpkE _____

Ribbon Wreck

Liza dropped the ribbon box. To prevent the ribbons from tangling, she should pick up the ribbon at the top of the pile and work her way down to the bottom ribbon. Put the ribbons in order.

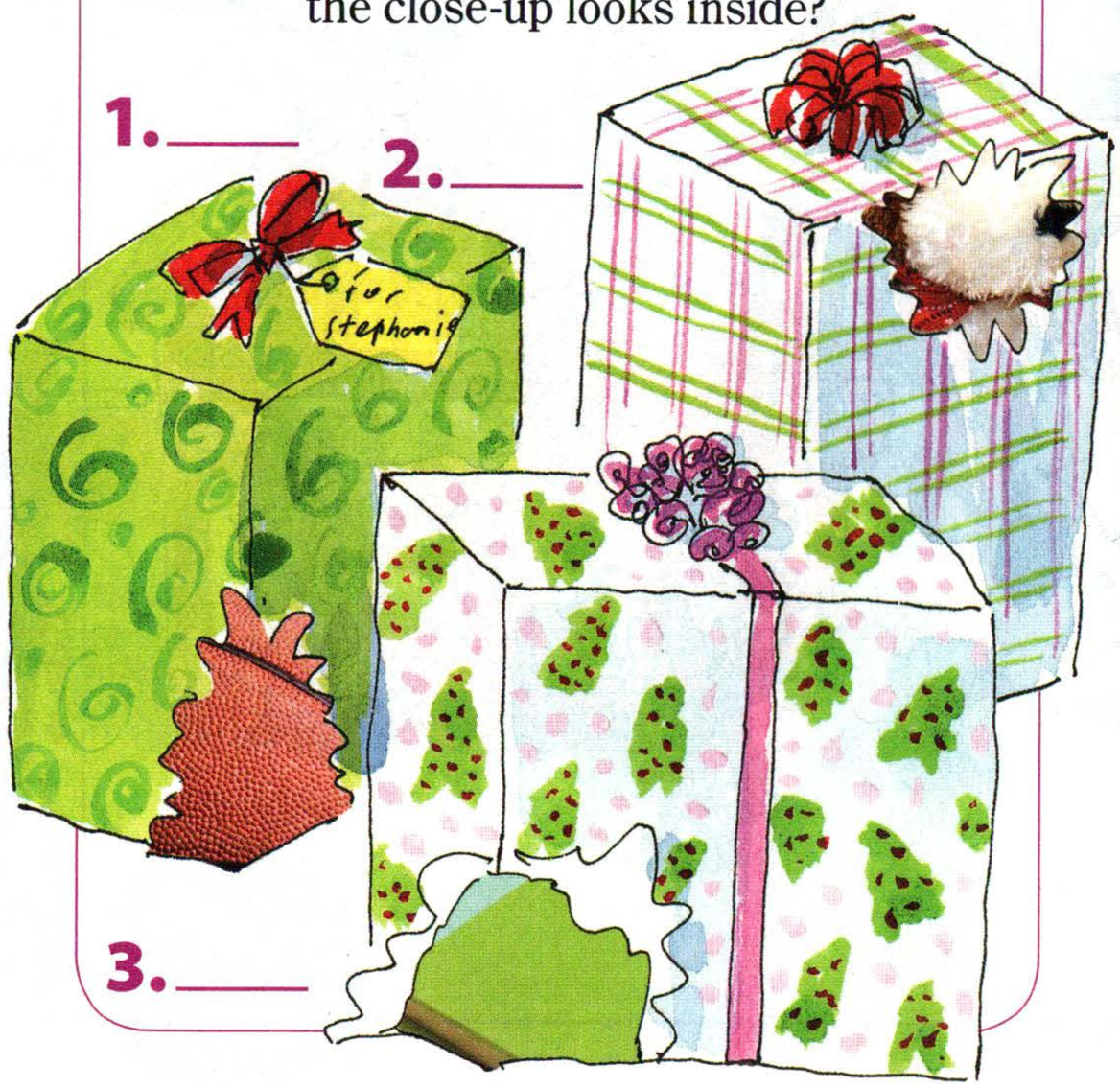
Pink: _____
Silver: _____
Blue: _____
Green: _____
Red: _____
Purple: _____



No Peeking!

Someone has started opening the presents early. Can you tell what the gifts are from the close-up looks inside?

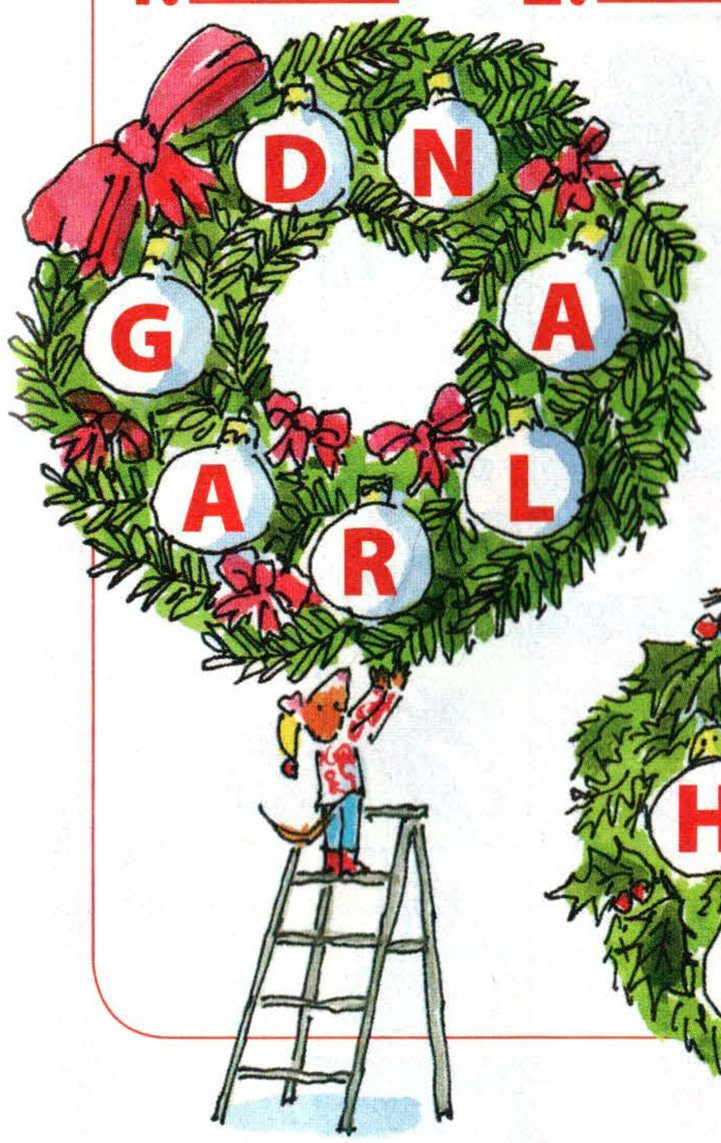
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



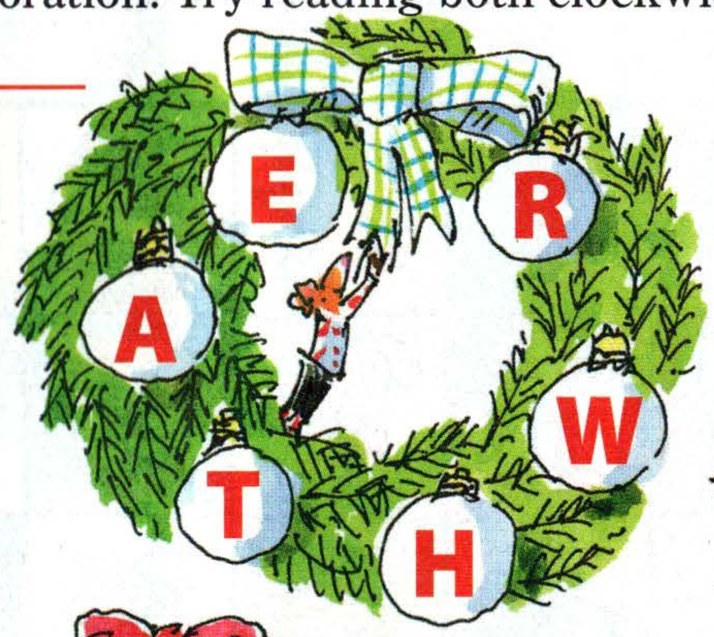
Word Wreaths

If you pick the right place to start reading on each wreath, you'll find the name of a holiday decoration. Try reading both clockwise and counterclockwise.

1. _____



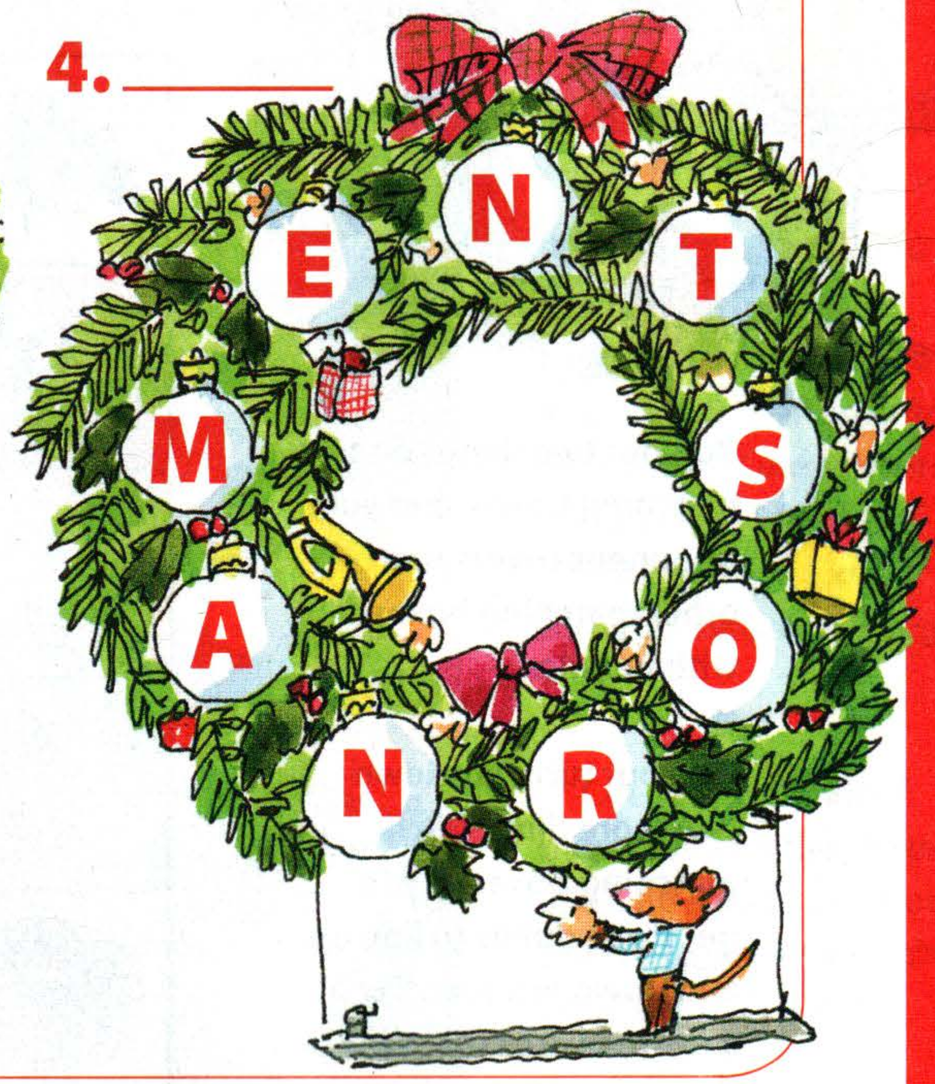
2. _____



3. _____



4. _____



Laffateria

What do you call a snowman that has melted away?



A no-man

Carmen C.
Age 10, Georgia

What did one snowman say to the other snowman?



"Hey, do you smell carrots?"

Megan G.
Age 9, Minnesota

Funny Business

Send your best joke to Brain Waves! Write to the address on page 2. Include your name, birth date, school photo, and signature.

What do snowmen wear on their heads?



Ice caps

Jenna B.
Age 11, West Virginia

What does a snowman eat for breakfast?



Frosted Flakes

Hannah W.
Age 10, Michigan





Snowman Strategy

Dig into your change jar to play this fun game. You'll need a handful of pennies and dimes to play.





1. You put two dimes on two matching boxes, and your opponent covers two other matching boxes with pennies.

2. On your turn, lay down two more dimes on matching boxes. Try to get three dimes to line up and down in a row, like a snowman—or try to block your friend from making her penny snowman.

3. The first player to make a snowman wins!



Answer Box

Village Voyage

You can finish your errands in lots of different ways. Here's one:

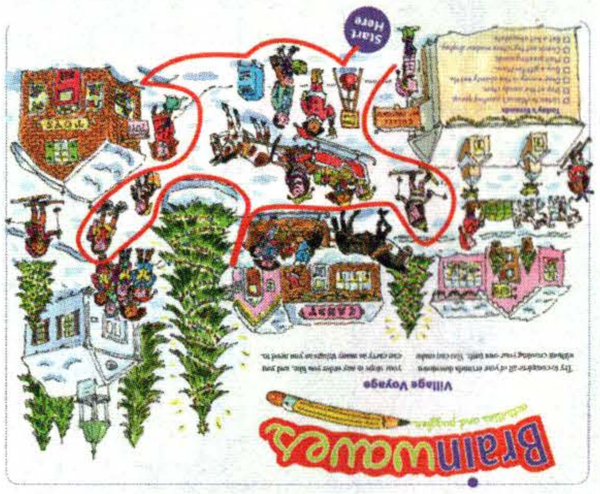


Photo Fun

The matching photos are 2 and 5.

New Year's Numbers

1. 52; 2. 366—remember, this was a leap year! 3. 120; 4. 10; 5. 1,000

Ribbon Wreck

Pick up the ribbons in this order: 1. green; 2. purple; 3. red; 4. blue; 5. pink; 6. silver

What's for Dessert?

1. brownies; 2. banana split; 3. raisin bread; 4. pineapple upside-down cake; 5. pumpkin pie. Yum!

No Peeking!

1. 
2. 
3. 

Word Wreaths

1. garland; 2. wreath; 3. lights; 4. ornaments

Girls Express

The buzzword, hoopla, is found in the table of contents, on pages 24 and 25, and on the insert.



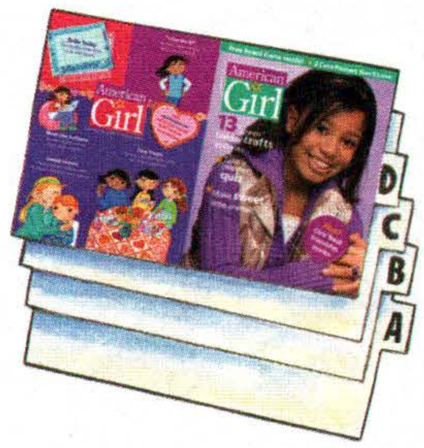
Mini Mag

With the Mini Mag, you can make a miniature copy of *American Girl* for your doll or stuffed animal. All you need are scissors and a stapler. Read the directions all the way through before you begin.

1 **Cut out each pair of pages only on the dotted lines. Be sure to cut around the tabs marked with the letters A, B, C, and D.**

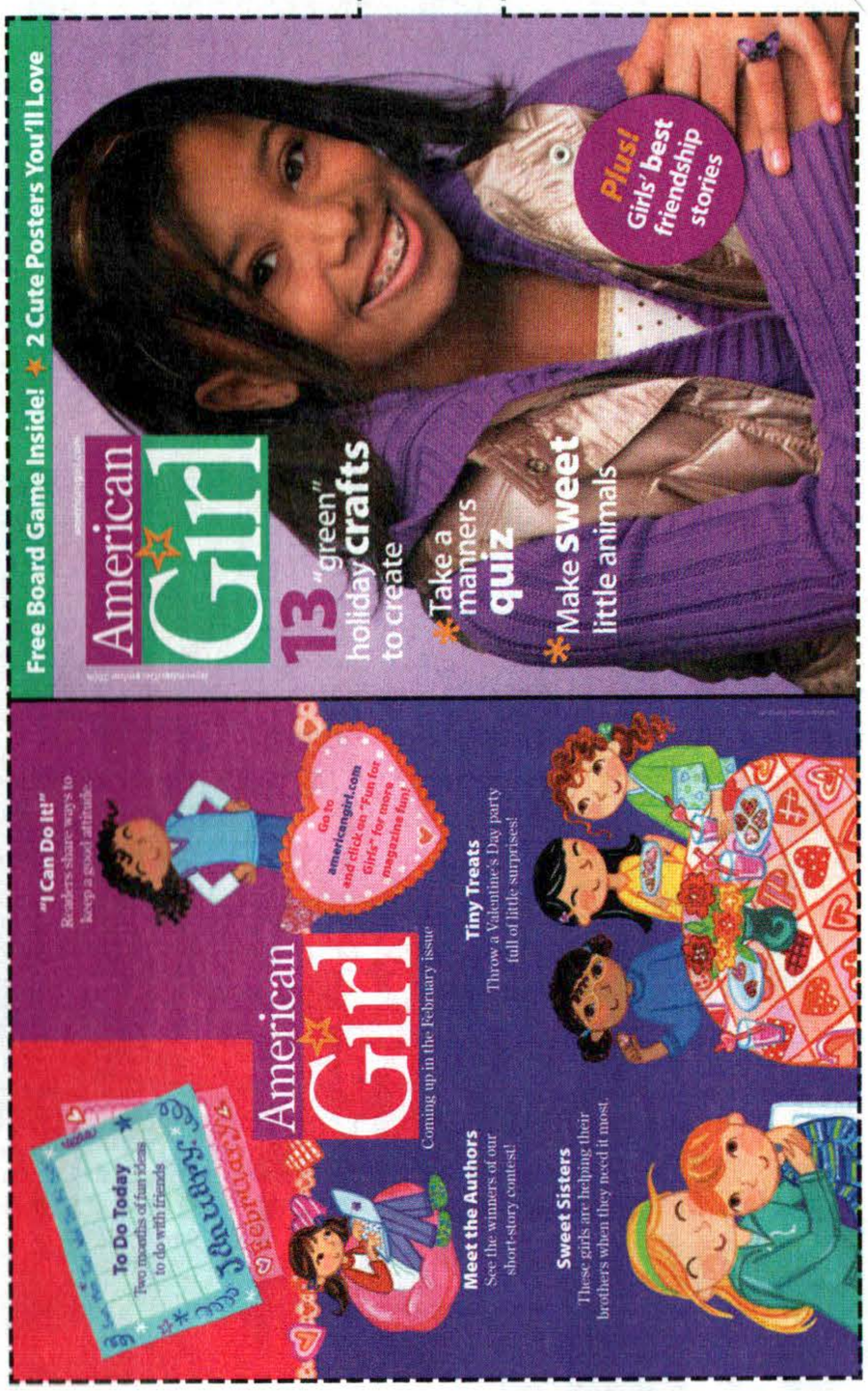


2 **Stack the pages on top of one another in the order shown below, with the letters on the tabs facing up.**



Continued









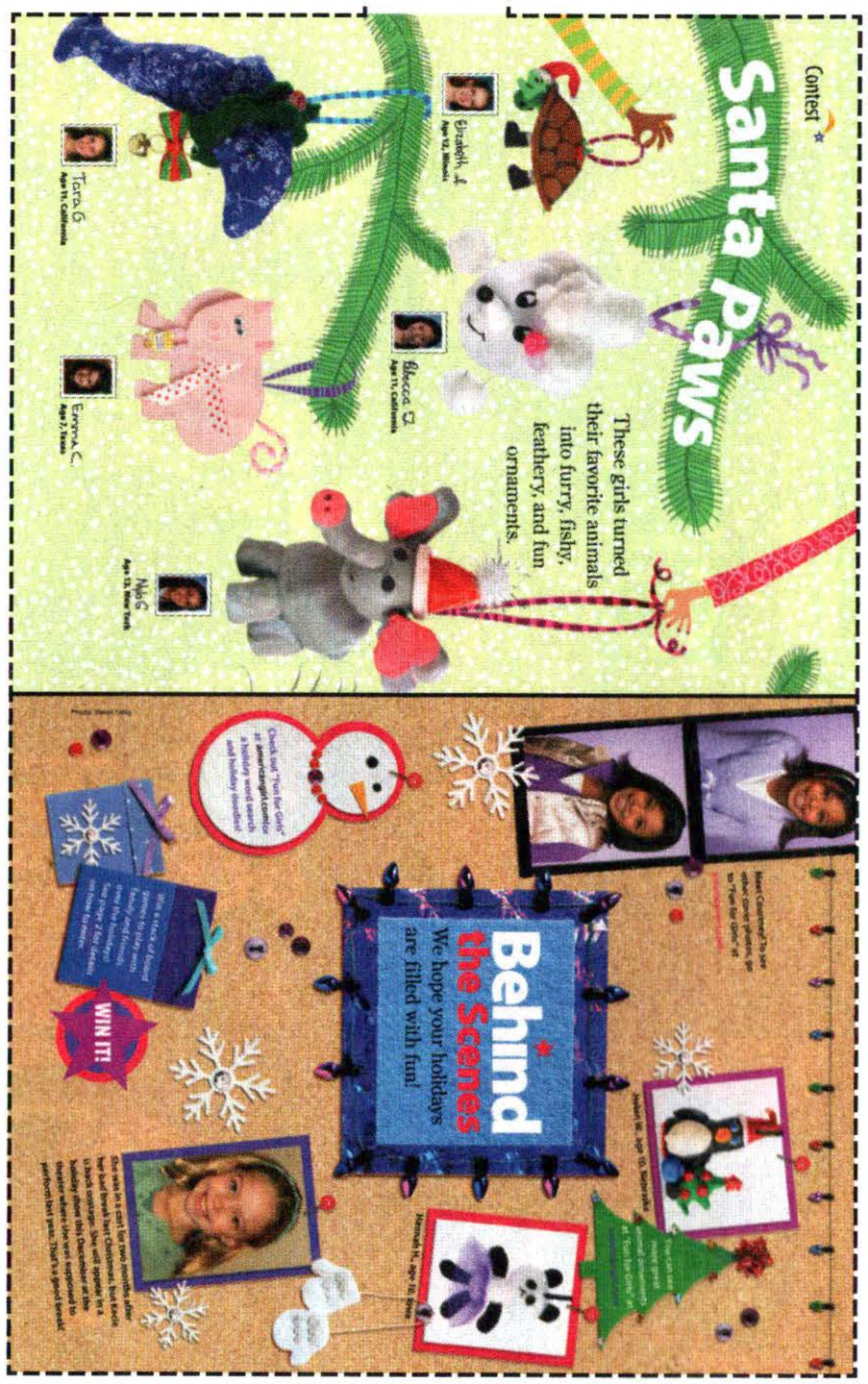
Mini Mag

3 Fold the stack of pages in half along the solid line in the center. The cover of the magazine should now be on top. Run your fingernail down the folded edge to help the pages lie flat.



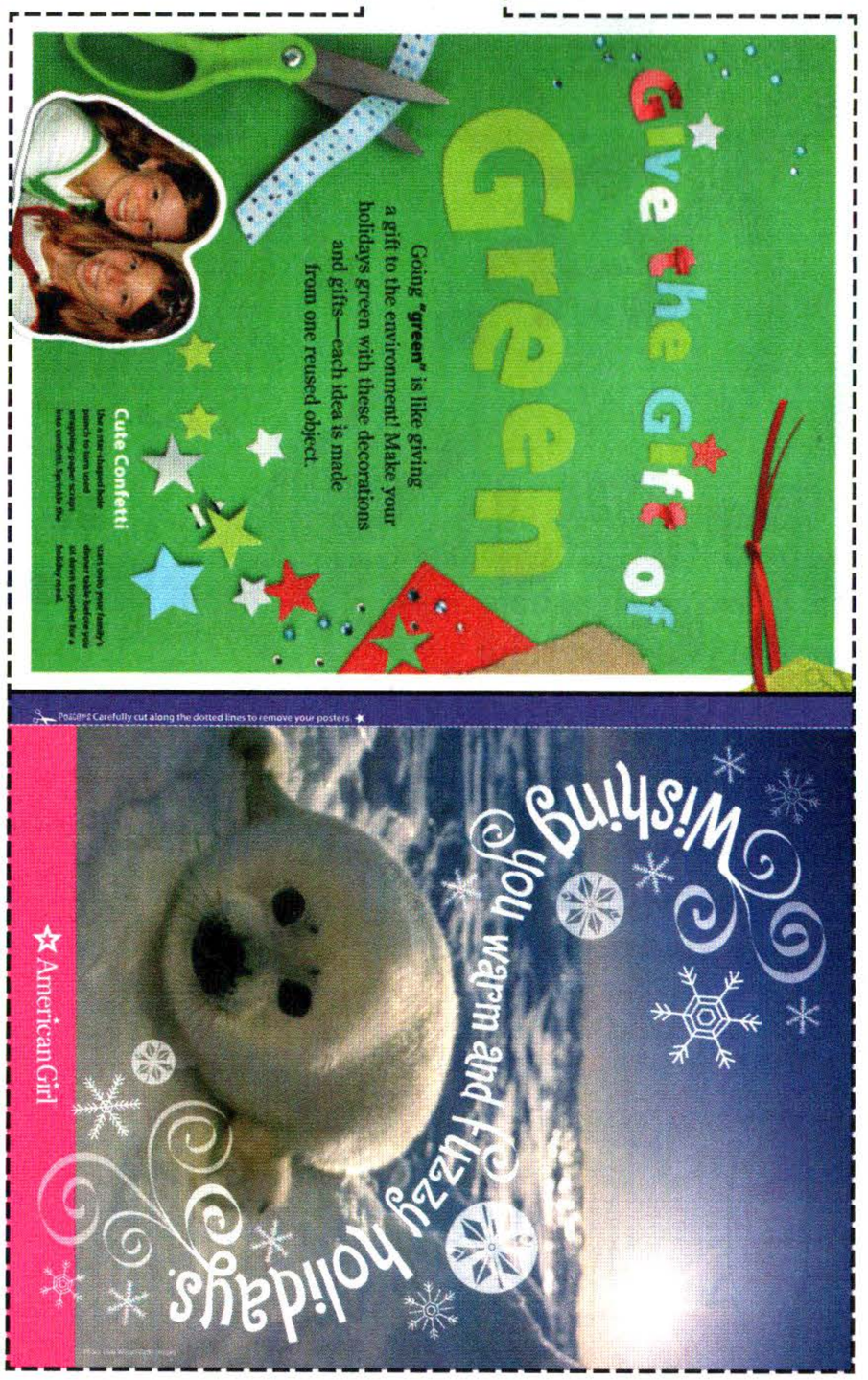
4 Open the folded stack. Staple along the center line. Cut off the tabs, and you're done!











Posters Carefully cut along the dotted lines to remove your posters.

Wishing you warm and fuzzy holidays



American Girl®

Photo: Dale Wilson/Getty Images

I am thankful for...

My friends

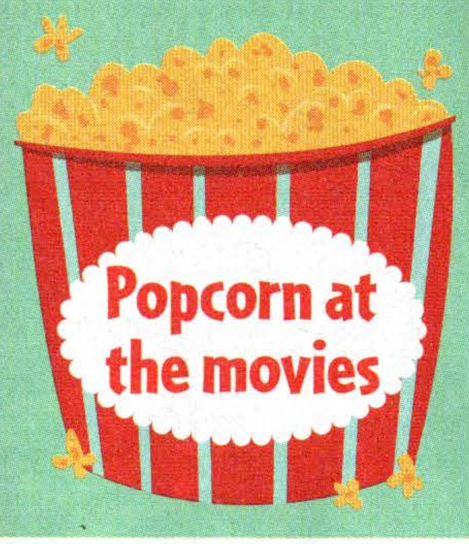


Bright colors



Starry nights

Popcorn at the movies

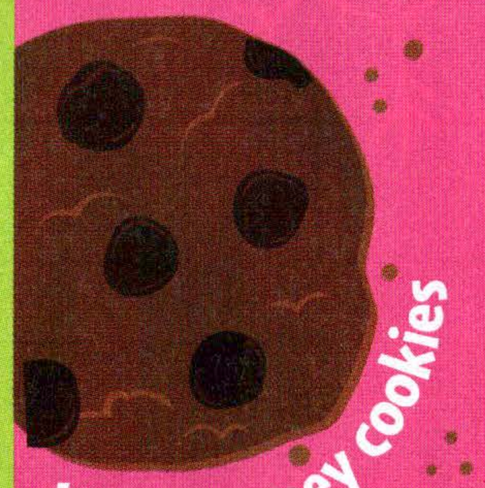


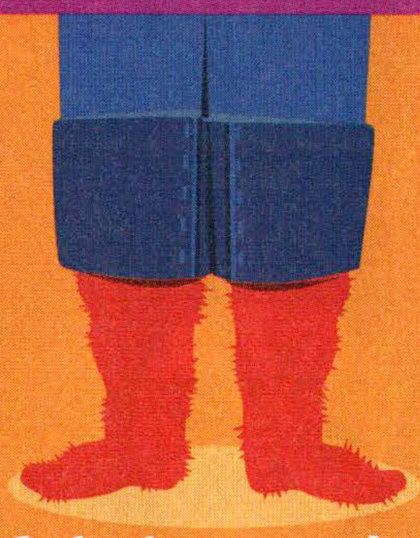
Ice-skating



Laughing

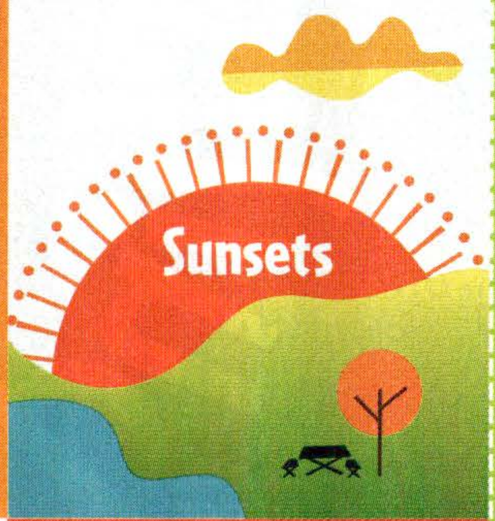
Warm, gooey cookies





Soft, fuzzy socks

Sunsets

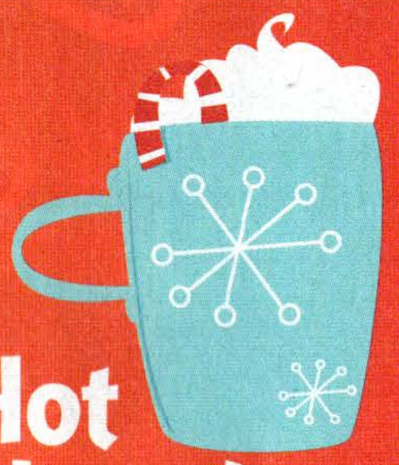


Snowdays





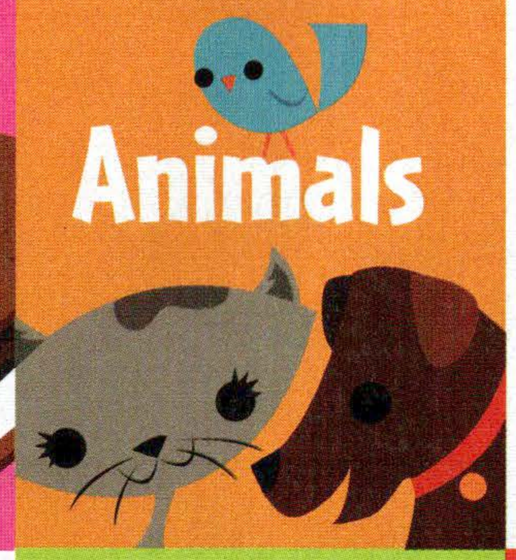
Hot chocolate



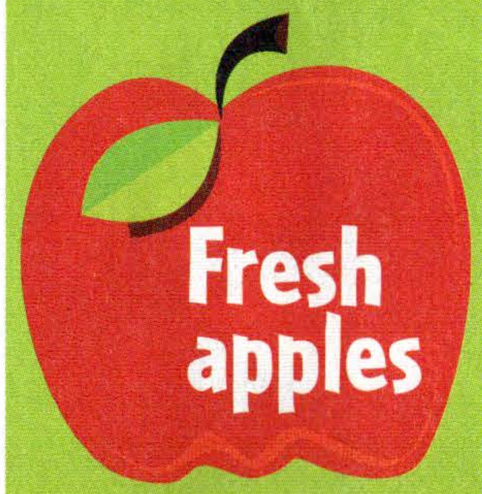
S'mores



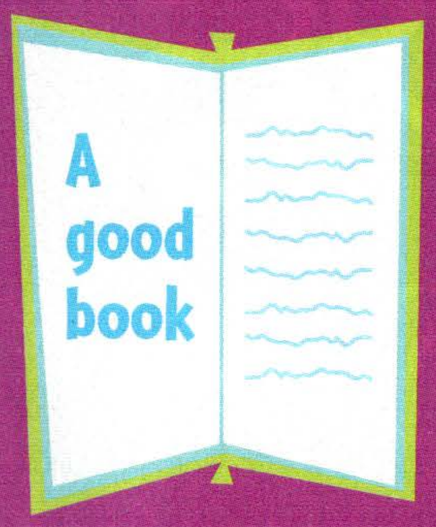
Animals



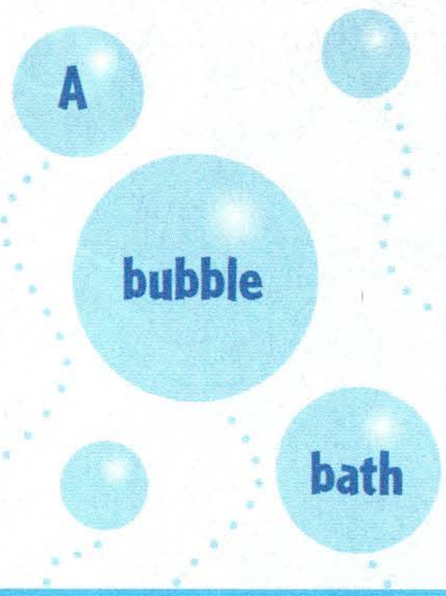
Fresh apples



A good book



A bubble bath



Cute shoes



A family who loves me



Illustrations: Lisa Perrett

American Girl®

HELP!



Dear *American Girl*,

Every December a place in my town sells Christmas trees. They have so many left over after the holidays! Every time I drive by and see all of the beautiful trees that will go to waste, I feel like crying. What can I do?

Want to help

It is hard to see trees go to waste. It might make you feel a little better to know that many cities grind up old Christmas trees to make wood chips for gardens, so the trees do get used again. Otherwise, try to focus on the things you use and buy, and do your best not to be wasteful.

★

Dear *American Girl*,

My mom is upset because my friend and I swapped shirts. My mom says I should have asked before I swapped, even though she would have said no. The thing is, my friend and I were planning to trade shirts again, and now we'll be disappointed. What should I tell my mom?

Sorry Shirt Swapper

Ask your mom why she doesn't want you to swap shirts. Maybe she's afraid someone's shirt will get damaged or lost. Can you find a compromise? Perhaps there are a few shirts that she'll let you swap but others that are off-limits. Whatever you do, don't try to do a secret swap—your mom will find out, and when she does, you'll lose her trust. That's worth more than any shirt.

★

Dear *American Girl*,

I've been really moody lately. At school I feel fine, but when I'm at home my "moody meter" goes to grumpy! I feel bad whenever someone tries to cheer me up and nothing happens to change my mood. What can I do?

Moody

Moodiness often happens when your energy level is low. That can be because you're growing, feeling stressed, or just worn out. Try to spend a few minutes chilling out when you get home. Have a snack and take a short nap if you need one. Eat right and get plenty of sleep at night, too. If you still find you're feeling cranky, talk to your parents about how to reduce the stress in your life.

★

Dear *American Girl*,

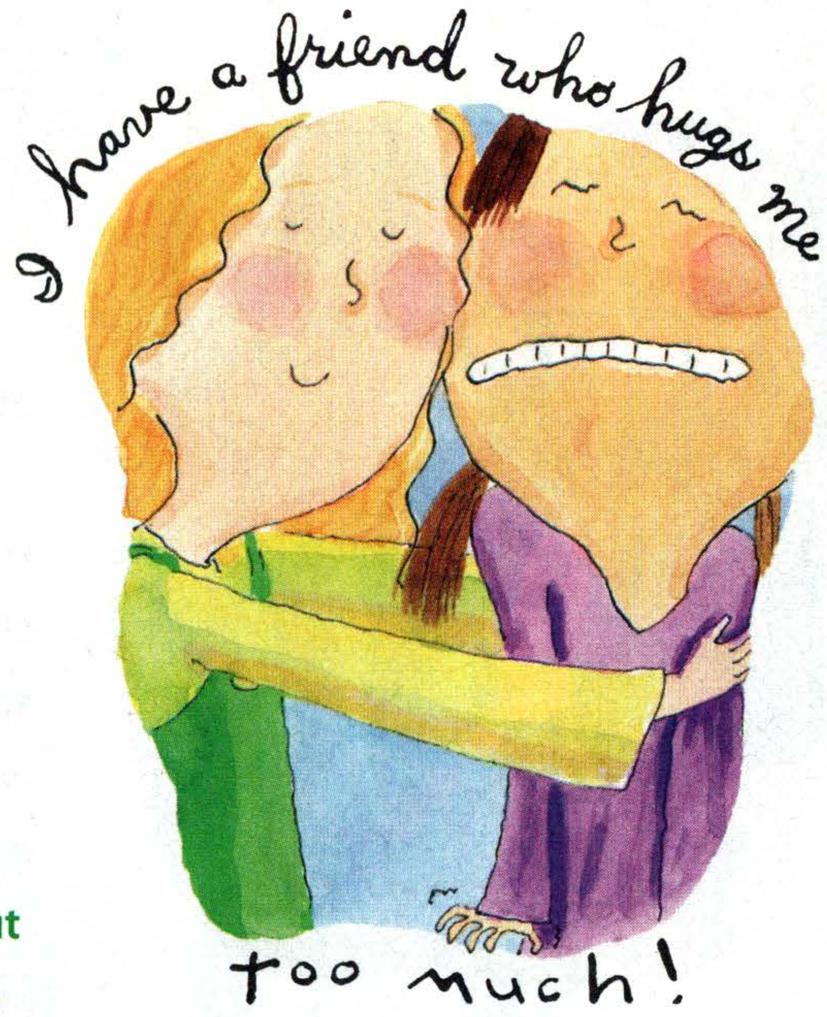
I just got an iPod for Christmas, and my best friend is obviously going to find out sooner or later. But when she does, she will be jealous! What should I do?

got a good gift

You can't control how your friend feels, but to avoid sounding like you are bragging, let her bring up the subject of gifts first. When she asks what you got, list a few things that you received and mention the iPod, but then change the subject. You don't have to pretend you aren't excited about your gift. Just don't use it all the time in front of her.

Illustrations: Laura Cornell

MORE HELP!



Dear *American Girl*,

I have a friend who hugs me too much. I've tried to stop her, but she just doesn't listen.

Friend Help!

Some people are more "huggy" than others, and your friend is definitely one of those people. But you shouldn't have to put up with being squeezed if you don't like it, so pick a good time to talk to her. Explain that while the two of you are alike in many ways, you have different opinions about hugging. Let her know that even though you really like her, you don't want to hug so often. Suggest another way of greeting each other, and see if she'll do that instead. Remember: A good friend will respect your feelings *and* your personal space.

★

Dear *American Girl*,

I'm kind of picky about my clothes. My birthday is coming up, and I'm worried that someone will give me something that I don't like. How should I react when I open a gift?

No thanks

When someone gives you a gift you don't like, you don't have to lie and say you love it, but you should try to find something nice to say about it. "Blue is my favorite color!" or "This sweater looks super warm" both work. And no matter how you *really* feel about the gift, it's always nice to say, "Thank you for thinking of me!"

★

Dear *American Girl*,

I never know what gifts to give people. What's even worse is that when I ask them what they want, they say either "I don't care" or "Surprise me." They're no help at all.

Guessing about gifts

When you're stuck for gift ideas, homemade items are always special. It's good to give something that is useful or that can be used up. For lots of useful gifts that you can make yourself, turn to page 12. Good gifts that can be used up include home-baked treats, hand-stamped cards or stationery, and coupon books for special favors that you create. These gifts will show that you really care, and that's what will matter most to the people you give them to.

★

Advice from You

"My little brother and I argue a lot. To help end an argument quickly, one of us will start to sing a favorite song we both know. Soon we forget what we were arguing about."

Caitlyn H.

Age 11, Pennsylvania

Need advice? Got advice? Write:

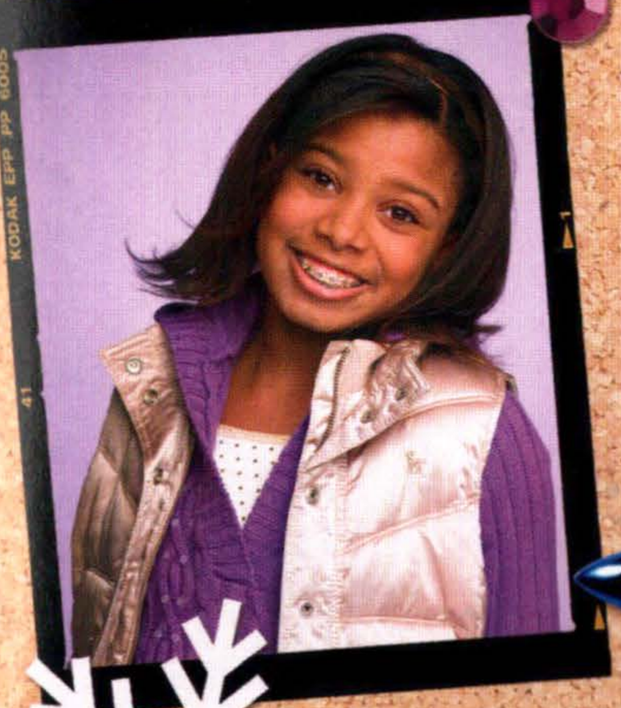
Help!

***American Girl* magazine**

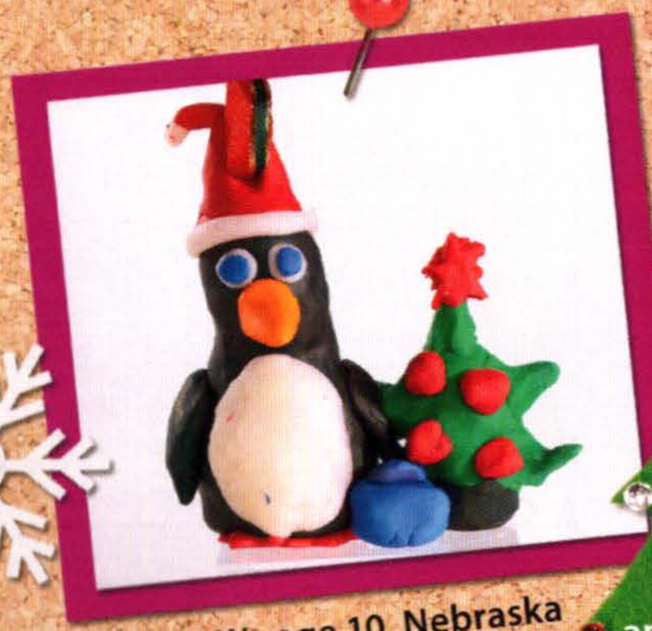
8400 Fairway Place

Middleton, WI 53562





Meet Courtney! To see other cover photos, go to "Fun for Girls" at americangirl.com.



Helen W., age 10, Nebraska

You can see more great animal ornaments at "Fun for Girls" at americangirl.com.

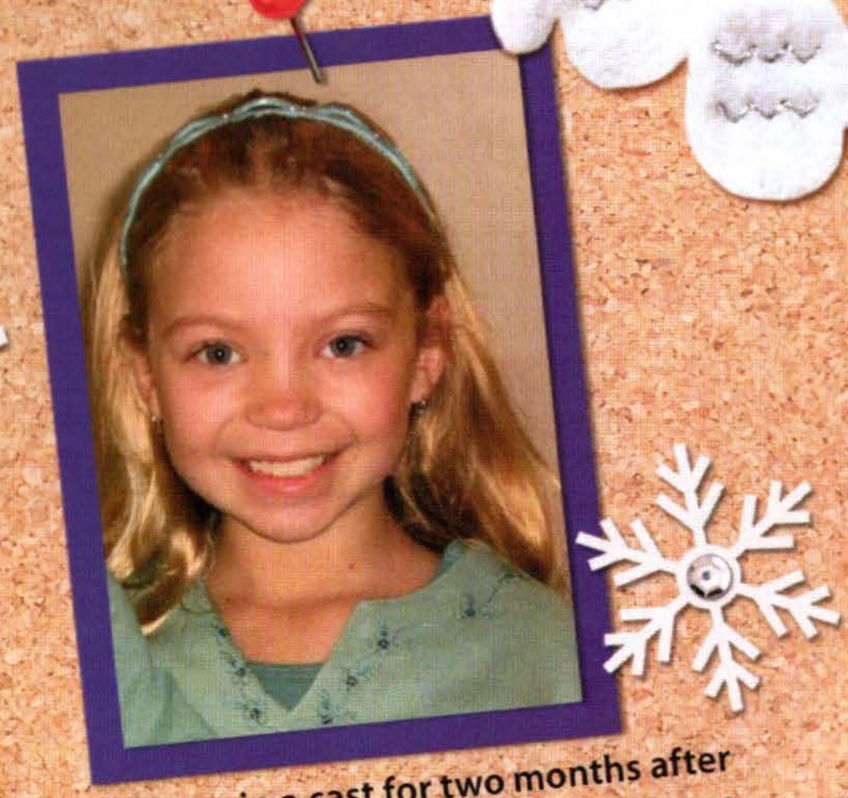
Behind the Scenes

We hope your holidays are filled with fun!



Hannah H., age 10, Iowa

Check out "Fun for Girls" at americangirl.com for a holiday word search and holiday doodles!



She was in a cast for two months after her bad break last Christmas, but Kacie is back onstage. She will appear in a holiday show this December at the theater where she was supposed to perform last year. That's a good break!

Win a stack of board games to play with family and friends over the holidays! See page 2 for details on how to enter.

WIN IT!

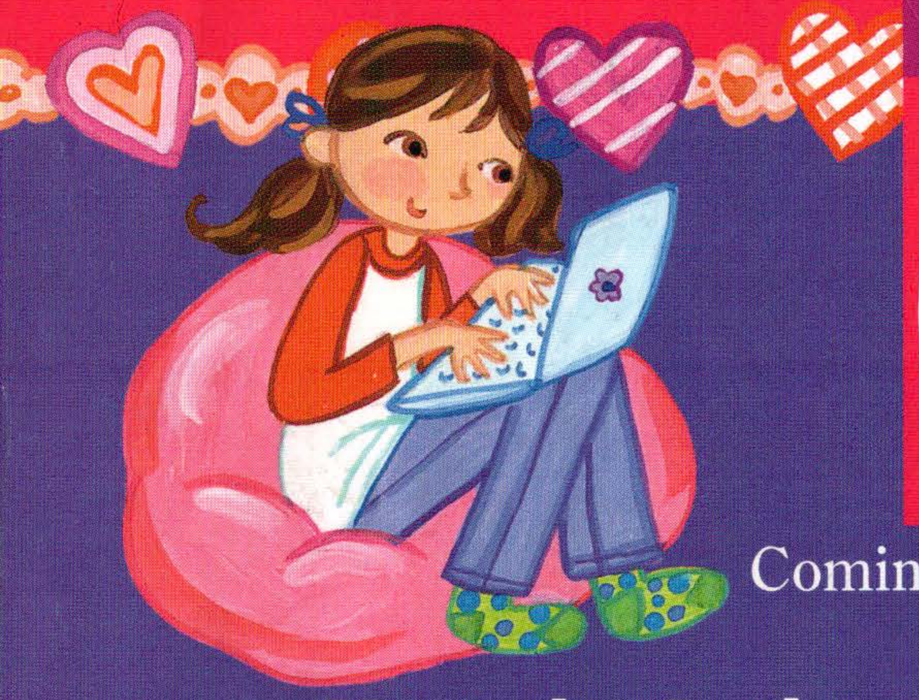
"I Can Do It!"

Readers share ways to keep a good attitude.



To Do Today

Two months of fun ideas to do with friends



American Girl®

Go to americangirl.com and click on "Fun for Girls" for more magazine fun!

Coming up in the January/February issue

Meet the Authors

See the winners of our short-story contest!

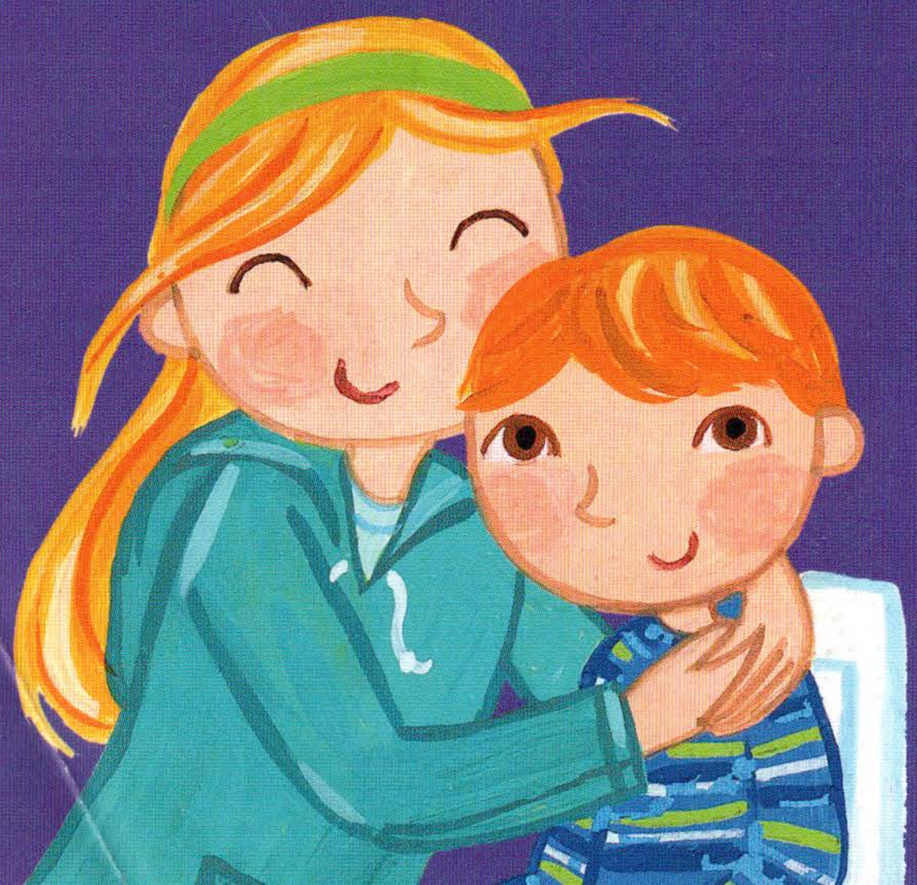
Tiny Treats

Throw a Valentine's Day party full of little surprises!



Sweet Sisters

These girls are helping their brothers when they need it most.



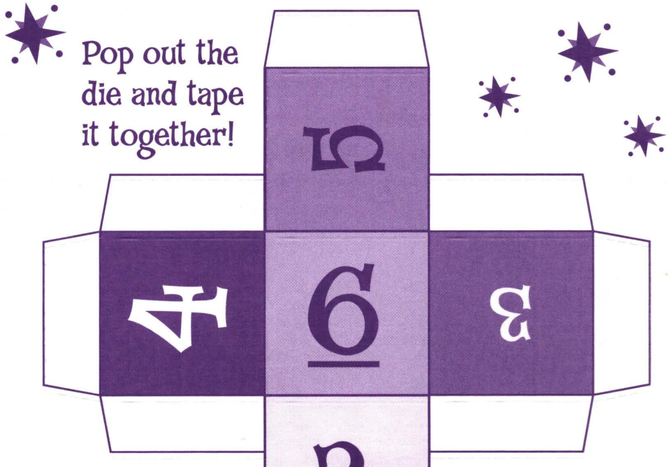
Illustrations: Carol Yoshizumi

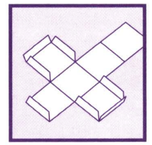
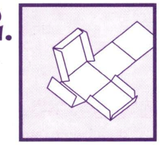
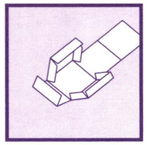
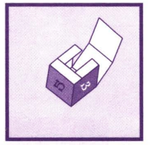
Holiday Hoopla!

Holiday Hoopla!

American Girl®

Pop out the die and tape it together!



1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 

Cut out the Holiday Hoopla cards along dashed lines.

How to Play Holiday Hoopla!

What You'll Need:

- The Holiday Hoopla game board
- The Holiday Hoopla cards
- A different game piece for each player (use different-colored pieces of candy, buttons, or other small objects)
- The die
- A timer
- Blank sheets of paper
- Pencils

This game is for two to six players. Place all of the game pieces on the Start space. The youngest player goes first.

When it's your turn, roll the die and move your game piece forward along the calendar days.

When you land on a Holiday Hoopla space, everyone shouts, "HOOPLA!" Draw a card, read it aloud, and follow the instructions on the card. If you choose not to do what is on the card, you will lose one turn.

After you're finished, place the card in a discard pile. The next turn goes to the player on your left.

If you run out of cards, shuffle them and use them again.

The first player to make it to January 1st wins!



Illustrations: Janell Genovese

If snow could be made of something else, what would you want it to be made of and why? Tell the whole group.	Draw a snowflake on a piece of paper—but you have only 10 seconds!	For 30 seconds, talk to the group as though you are a talking snowperson and have them ask you questions.	Tell everyone one silly thing that you are thankful for and why (e.g., "I am thankful for marshmallows, because . . .").
Sing your favorite holiday song while balancing on one foot and touching your nose with one hand.	Pretend that you're a news anchor giving a report that a Thanksgiving turkey escaped from a family's dinner table and is missing.	Act out a scene from your favorite holiday movie. You can talk, but don't give it away. The group has one minute to guess the movie.	Create an "ice sculpture" from one piece of paper. You have one minute! Then everyone has to guess what it is.
Think of your favorite holiday food and try to describe it using hand gestures—no talking! The group has to guess what it is.	On a piece of paper, design an outfit to wear to a holiday party. You have one minute!	Create a new holiday cookie. In one minute, tell the group the ingredients it would have and describe how it would taste.	Draw a portrait of yourself—as a snowperson. You have 30 seconds.
Can you say this tongue twister three times fast? "Sally saw seven snowy sleds sliding speedily on slippery slopes."	You're a famous person coming to a holiday dinner. You can talk, but don't say your name. The group has one minute to guess who you are.	Make up a funny new holiday greeting, such as "Merry Holidays!" or "Decemberrific!" Tell the whole group your new holiday greeting.	Make up a dance to the song "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer." While you dance, everyone needs to sing the song out loud!
Change the lyrics to the song "Jingle Bells" and make it into a song about summer.	Use your arms and legs to form the shapes of these holiday objects: Turkey. Star. Candy cane. Have the group quickly shout them out!	Make up a song about Thanksgiving. Sing it to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." You have one minute to sing it.	Pretend you are opening an invisible gift. Act out what the gift is. The group has one minute to guess what it is.
Pretend that you're a reporter interviewing people at a New Years' Eve party. Ask each person, "What's your New Year's resolution?"	In one minute on a piece of paper, draw a mascot for Thanksgiving that's *not* a turkey. Name your mascot and tell everyone about it.	Do your best reindeer impression. Make reindeer antlers using your hands. Then make the group laugh by holding them up to your head.	For 30 seconds, pretend you are a turkey performing in a dance contest. Gobble, gobble, gobble!
On a piece of paper, draw your dream gingerbread house with all of your favorite candies. You have one minute.	Tell everyone three New Year's resolutions that you could *never* keep (e.g. "I couldn't ever not eat candy for a whole year!").	Make up a holiday superhero. Give your superhero a name and list the superpowers he or she would use to help people.	You have one minute to write a three-line poem about your favorite holiday food. Read the poem aloud to the group.
Pretend you are a Thanksgiving turkey running for President. Stand up and give your campaign speech.	Use your real name and make up a holiday nickname, such as Snowy Sara. Everyone has to use your nickname for the rest of the game.	Plan your dream holiday party. Tell the group where it would be, what decorations you would put up, and the activities you would do.	Invent a new holiday. Tell everyone what you would call it and what your holiday would celebrate.